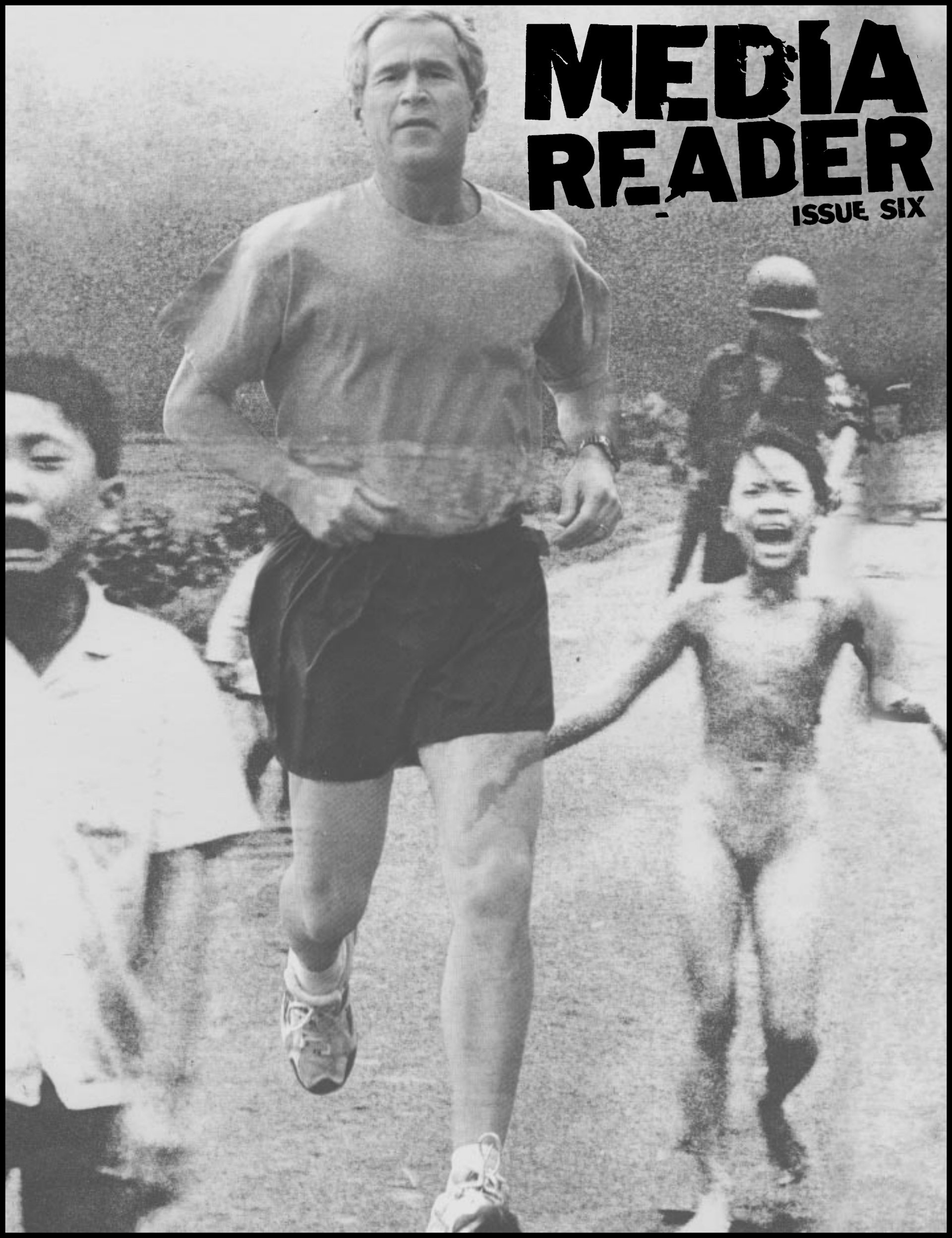


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MAIN

Dave Laney

COPY EDITOR

Kate Monahan

CONTRIBUTORS

Sandra Barron
Eric Boehme
Al Burian
Vincent Chung
Roby Newton
Nils
Mike Rhoades

REVIEWERS

Al Burian
Andy
Dave Laney
Dave W
Noah Leger

CONTACT

info@mediareader.org
www.mediareader.org

NEW ADDRESS

Post Box 220386
Chicago, IL 60622

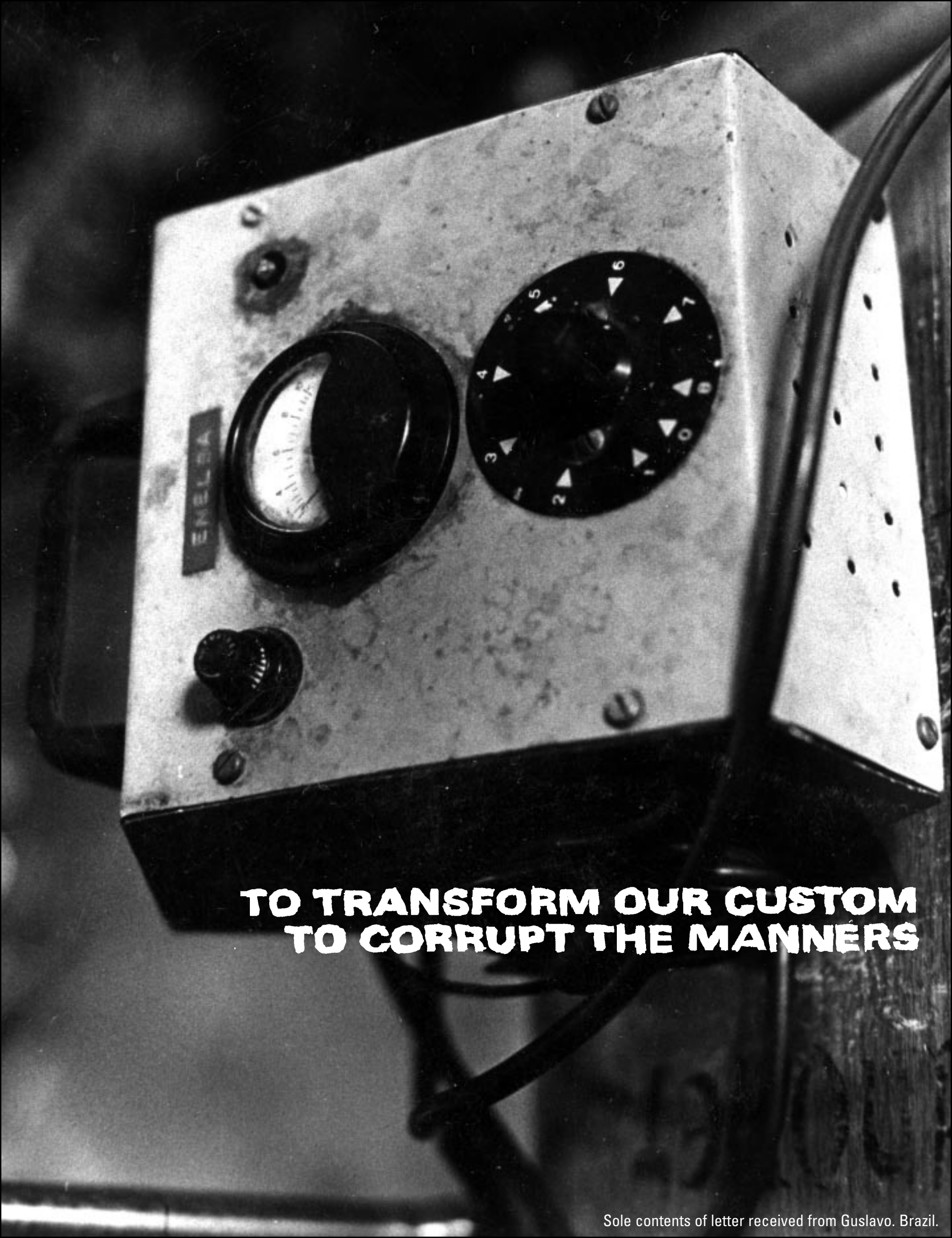
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A black and white photograph of a vintage electronic device, possibly a radio or amplifier. The device has a light-colored, rectangular metal casing with a dark base. On the front panel, there is a circular gauge with a needle and a scale, a rotary dial with numbers 1 through 6 and triangular markers, and a small, dark, cylindrical component. A thick black cable is connected to the side of the device. The background is dark and out of focus.

**TO TRANSFORM OUR CUSTOM
TO CORRUPT THE MANNERS**

YOUTH ON THE FRONTLINES IN BOTSWANA'S WAR AGAINST AIDS



Former Miss Universe Mpule Kwelagobe cuts a striking figure in a bright white pantsuit that tapers to stiletto heels, but it's her message that rivets hundreds of people gathered in a thatch-roofed meeting house in a small village on the outskirts of Botswana's capital.

"I'm infected, you're infected," she says boldly.

As a guest of honor before tribal elders in dark suits and neckties and teenagers in traditional fox-skin dance costume she continues: "Because we live in an infected country."

Rows of children in bright T-shirts crowd around the outside of the open-walled *kgotla*, and middle aged nurses listen raptly to the elegant young woman with the urgent, lilting voice.

"And until this country wins the war against HIV/AIDS, then no one here can say, 'I am not infected.'"

Indeed, this southern African country of 1.6 million people is believed to be the most infected on earth. Current government estimates say that more than one in three adults is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Kwelagobe devoted her 1999-2000 Miss Universe reign to bringing public and private money and attention to the epidemic in her native country, and continues to use her status as Botswana's best-loved celebrity to spread her message of youth empowerment to combat the disease and the havoc it is wreaking on all facets of society.

"If ever as young people we are to win this war against HIV/AIDS, it is going to come from more youth-friendly centers, more youth projects, it is going to come through more young people being educated, peer educated...I challenge you now to put the responsibility on young people and realize just how easily they will live up to that responsibility."

Experts in the country agree that engaging young people will be one key to getting the epidemic under control.

Dr. Banu Khan, a long-time AIDS researcher and important figure on the national AIDS council, said that training and deploying young people as volunteer counselors is one major arm of the government's strategy to combat the spread of the virus.

Botswana's rich diamond mines and stable government have contributed to a remarkably developed health care infrastructure, but a Ministry of Health survey last year showed that young people weren't accessing it fully. The study showed that although teenagers were relatively aware of the medical risks they were facing, they avoided health clinics because they felt that nurses, usually as old as their own parents, would "shake their finger at them"—tell them that they just shouldn't have sex instead of listening to their situation. Furthermore, young people said they were too embarrassed to queue for pregnancy care or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases in the same waiting room as older members of the same close-knit community.

To combat this situation, the government is opening youth-friendly clinics around the country, with help from organizations like the UNFPA and private foundations.

These clinics, often housed in trailers near existing youth centers, are staffed by specially trained nurses who provide routine health care, and also do pregnancy and HIV tests, and dispense condoms and other forms of birth control without condemning the young people who come to them for help.

In addition to the new attitude among nurses, a large part of the clinics' success is owed to the devoted young volunteers who work there.

Gaone Beauty Dikgole, 22, is one such volunteer. She works unpaid full time, five days a week, in an orange trailer on a hill that overlooks distant low, green mountains in Kwelagobe's home village of Kanye.

The clinic is half an hour by car from Gabarone—the last 15 up a deeply rutted red dirt road—and is well appointed inside.

A reception desk inside the front door holds detailed, handwritten records of the age, sex, reason for visit and treatment or activity done for each of the dozens of people who come to the clinic each day. Behind the desk is a faded color photo collage of the recent Miss Kanye pageant.

There is a tiny library full of brochures and pamphlets on reproductive health, and a small, square examination room with a table, autoclave, medicine and equipment, and a cluttered metal desk. Nurses here do Pap smears, HIV tests, and pregnancy tests. There are two bathrooms with running water and flush toilets.

Beauty sits behind a desk in the counseling room, then jumps up and becomes a whirlwind for a moment, gesturing at the tiny room's appointments: dog-eared AIDS prevention posters in Setswana (the local language) and English, a computer, a cabinet filled with educational videos for lending, a small window overlooking a wild field, and a cheerful bulletin board covered with what seems to be every variety of condom in existence—different brands, textures, even flavors—as well as the female condom, lubricants, and dental dams.

She is dynamic and passionate about teaching young people how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. She counsels young people every day, and thinks they listen to what she says because they can relate to her, and because she tries to give a message that's appropriate to each person. She tells young primary school children to concentrate on school and suggests they stay away from sex completely, but gives out as many as 10 condoms at a time to older teenagers, along with instructions.

She enthusiastically and explicitly demonstrates with anatomical models—a hand-carved wooden penis and a hollow plastic vagina—how to use the male and female condoms. "I used to be very shy, she gloats, waving the wooden penis she has just ensheathed. "Look at me now! The male condom! The female condom! I can tell a thousand people how to use them!"

She travels to local schools, giving demonstrations like this and urging young people to "change behavior" to avoid risky sex.

She knows "two or three" people her age who have died of AIDS. "I'll never get tired of talking to people like this." Her rapid-fire speech slows to a low, measured cadence for the first time. "Because we are dying."

Jorunn Tverland, 28, a registered nurse from Denmark who volunteers full time at another youth-friendly clinic said, "This [AIDS epidemic] came quite fast, and attitudes haven't changed fast enough."

She added, "From us [nurses], it sounds like moralizing. That's why the youth are so important."

Five hours away by car, volunteers are waging the same struggle in Francistown, a more industrialized city and one of Botswana's largest.

A local activist calls Francistown "the AIDS capital of the world." One official says 29% of people there between the ages of 15 and 19 are HIV positive, and acknowledges this may be an underestimate. It is a city with British-style traffic lights and street signs, and new cars and vans traveling fully paved roads—but also the occasional donkey or herd of goats blocking an intersection.

Signs of burgeoning infrastructure mingle with hints of death. The city center doesn't look too different from a small town in the US or England or Japan. There are quite a few banks, a Spar convenience store, Shell and BP gas stations, a coffee shop, a florist, restaurants. The four-lane highway that stretches 400 km to the capital through rolling grassland and short, scattered trees is in the process of being widened along most of its length. Heavy power lines tower along the entire route.

Almost all of the billboards advertise cellular phone service, and most of the rest are for 24-hour funeral homes. Hotels leave a sheath of condoms next to the soap and shampoo in guestrooms.

Bumper stickers for an HIV testing clinic promising "Same day results!" implore passers-by to "know your status!" A public service poster at a construction site shows a cartoonish drawing of an unfurled condom and urges bluntly, "Wear it!" On the radio, public service announcements in Setswana warn against the "disease that comes from sharing sheets."

The youth-friendly clinic here is a pilot project by the Ministry of Health. If the program is found to be successful after a one-year assessment this July, it will be replicated and expanded nationally.

For now, it is located in a separate part of a public clinic. The one-story building is set on a smooth gravel driveway a few minutes from the town center. Two long clotheslines stretch across the freshly mown lawn behind the building that opens into a large vegetable garden. Over a tall wire fence, people tend small plots around cinderblock homes with corrugated tin roofs. The road leading to the clinic is paved and lined, but rutted clay roads branch off it into surrounding villages.

Airy corridors lead to a sunny garden in the courtyard. There is a bright maternity ward, with 18 white steel-frame beds in two rows covered in neat pink blankets that match the curtains. Adjoining is a separate examination and delivery room equipped to handle normal births, and an ambulance is parked outside to take patients to the nearby hospital in case of complications.

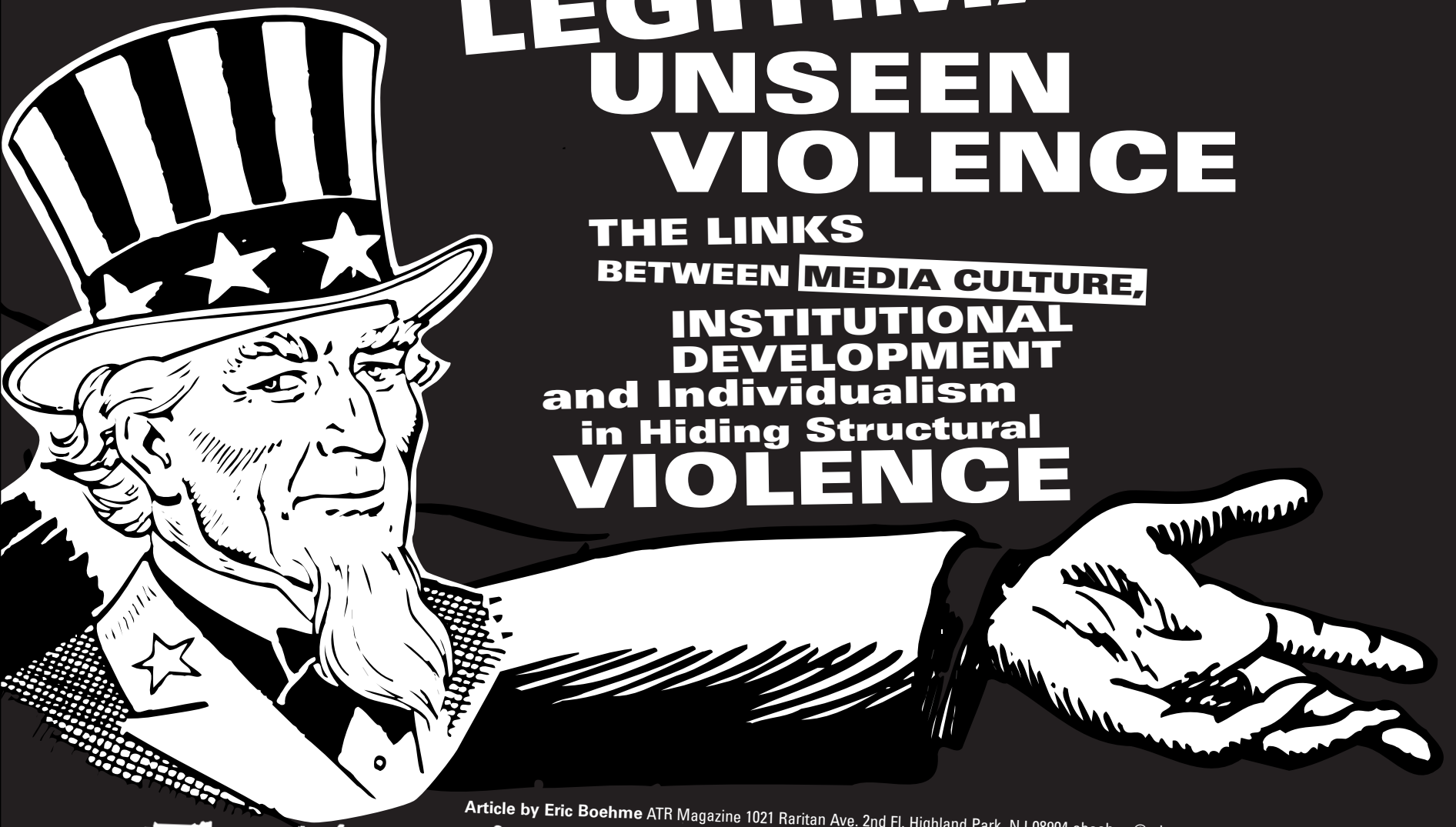
Patients wait on wooden benches in the hallway to see a doctor or nurse for any type of ailment. After being diagnosed, they can get medicine from a dispensary window down the hall. In the far opposite corner is a tiny room with bare concrete walls and a heavy desk with one chair wedged behind and one in front of it. This is the youth counseling room. As many as 10 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 25 staff the room all day each weekday and Saturday afternoons. If the program is continued, there are plans to build a separate clinic exclusively for young people, but for now the proposed site, several miles from this clinic, is a dusty soccer field with rusty skeletons of goals.

When Osadi Lydiah Pilane, a volunteer here, tells her peers about the dangers of unprotected sex, she knows what she's talking about. She's 23 years old, not much older than the young people she counsels. She has a bright smile and easy manner that belie the hardships she has faced. She had a child at 17, with a boyfriend who left her when she became pregnant. She said before that, no one had told her the consequences of unprotected sex. She lives with her older sister, who is also unmarried and has a child. Pilane's father died when she was still a baby, and her uncle and her mother both died of AIDS within the last year. She says she personally knows "about 20" people who have died of the disease.

"Every day youth are dying," she says. "I don't want to see the youth of Botswana dying." She trained as a peer educator in high school, and now devotes six days a week to helping teach other youth the lessons that she learned the hard way. She volunteers at the clinic and visits local junior and senior high schools, both counseling people directly, and teaching other young people to be counselors like her. At night, she takes computer classes.

She proudly shows off a card from a local free testing clinic that she carries with her, tucked into her passport. "Look, I'm not HIV positive yet," she says. She smiles, then corrects herself.

"I'm not HIV positive." ◀



LEGITIMATING UNSEEN VIOLENCE

THE LINKS
BETWEEN **MEDIA CULTURE,**
INSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
and Individualism
in Hiding Structural
VIOLENCE

Article by Eric Boehme ATR Magazine 1021 Raritan Ave. 2nd Fl. Highland Park, NJ 08904 eboehme@eden.rutgers.edu

The United States is often characterized as an unusually violent country compared to other so-called first world countries.

We see images of violence nightly on the news, violence is a mainstay of our entertainment and criminology statistics in the U.S. are rife with violent events. The United States has a Constitutionally protected right to bear arms and a history and tradition of violence whether from the Civil War, on the frontier, during strikes, in vigilante, or lynching groups, or today's gangs, militias, drug lords, and mobsters, the historical development of the United States has followed a violent path. Today, the U.S. consistently leads the industrialized world in criminology statistics for violent crimes. Recently the media has come under attack by members of the elite, attacks emanating from both Congress, civil society and private and religious interest groups

accusing television, music, video games and the movies of promoting violence through selling violent imagery. What members of Congress and concerned mothers in pressure groups are warning us about is, in their eyes, the penchant for individuals to be influenced by violent images in the media, and then act out these images in real life. Yet rarely if ever do these warnings include a critique of a larger structure promoting systematic violence on a broad, almost unseen level. Never do we see exposes or programs about how capitalism and racism work together to legitimate and sponsor a kind of violence that strikes over time, a violence that causes harm but often is not seen or recognized to be violence.

Without addressing the issue of whether or not the media promotes individual acts of violence, this article will make an argument about unseen violence and the role the media plays in promoting and legitimating harm to certain groups of people. In making this argument, I will distinguish between two types of violence: direct vio-

lence, which occurs as a measurable event against a single individual, and structural violence, which is a mixture of bodily harm and reduction in life chances that effects large groups of people over time. Typically we think about and talk about direct violence as an act perpetrated by an individual or a state against another individual. Most of the statistics in criminology and many of the events portrayed by the media are incidences of direct violence. Yet when Ford recalls tires after knowing for some time they were defective, tobacco companies develop unsafe or purposefully addictive products, when factories pollute the air or water, when government and private real estate collude to create racially segregated ghettos concentrating poverty and increasing the chances of direct violence, a kind of structural violence is done. This violence however is not necessarily considered "deviant" behavior as is the violence done by criminals. Some of it may eventually be considered unlawful—when the courts get around to awarding settlements from lawsuits. Yet much of this is not considered unlawful or uneven illegitimate behavior because of the way market-society has taught us to think about violence.

Order and Security in Society: How Groups with Power Create the Conditions for Structural Violence

Political institutions and governance create order and security for citizens by establishing procedures and norms that safeguard against arbitrary acts of violence. Yet providing security and order

develops a variety of coercive mechanisms and institutions. In democratic regimes, citizens ostensibly decide on or legitimate the types of coercion used by the state. Thus Weber’s contention that the state wields the monopoly on legitimate violence supports the idea that citizens willingly participate or give their consent to being governed if the state can provide stability and order. Yet states provide different forms of stability and order using differing methods of coercion. Most European nation-states are centralized, where top-down state mechanisms restrain violence, and society is ordered through the actions and decisions people in political institutions make. Because the European class system was so deeply tied to the centralization of the feudal and later the capitalist state, the coercions involved in creating order and security flowed from interconnections between political and the social institutions. Thus coercive and societal security/ordering was publicly articulated through a heavily politicized sphere of class relations.

Conversely, the United States never had a feudal economic system that centralized the state and created distinct

do violence through suppressing street protests, utilizing the death penalty, or warring on other countries. However, violence and coercion also exist in the economic and social realm. Often we consider the violence of a direct event occurring in society or the economy to be illegitimate—a violent crime or corporate malfeasance resulting in harm to a worker or a consumer. Yet we never consider interrogating the structures or the decisions made by elites over the course of an institution’s development that create and enable the situation for these events of direct violence to occur. Why are poverty and capitalism not considered illegitimate forms of violence?

The dispersion of forms of coercion across social, political and economic institutions in the United States allowed certain forms of harm and coercion to be normatively evaluated as legitimate. Indeed, many of the harms I will come to define as “structural violence” are seen by many people as either unfortunate or unintended consequences of a market society. Indeed, the media reinforces these ideas by focusing on incidences of direct violence as spectacle while minimiz-

Coercion then, seems to be the word between force and choice, because one can be willingly forced through coercion, and one can choose to force oneself through coercion.

and enduring class relations. There was no legitimate monopoly on the use of violence in the United States. Federalism split sovereignty and societal ordering was carried on locally by promoting multiple and disparate modes and traditions of creating a secure and ordered polity. A lack of a societal class structure gave the guise of democratic equality in the securing and ordering of American. Yet rather than centralized coercion through political institutions, the United States developed a coercive system for ordering and stabilizing society with multiple points of access. A strong liberal and anti-statist consensus allowed various social and economic institutions to share power with the state in enforcing security and order. Over time, the coercive system securing and ordering society became institutionalized, creating a unique mix between the coercions of different social, economic, and political institutions in the United States. However, in spite of a lack of class consciousness, coercive mechanisms in the U.S. work along both class and racial lines—coercion is distributed unequally through political, economic and social institutions—society is ordered through the subordination of the poor and people of color.¹ Because of the media’s focus on individuals rather than groups or structures, this coercion and structural violence is actually reinforced and legitimated.

Decentralized law enforcement subject to strong influence from local populist cultural currents and majoritarian ideas created different institutions and laws in varying localities and states. Split sovereignty between local, state and national institutions articulated the Framers compromise between a centralized coercive state, a minimal Lockean state protecting individual rights and the private sphere, and a local, participatory republican tradition. In the United States, the solution to “the problem of order,” came from a complex mix of these three traditions—a strong national Hobbesian state creates a functioning market, while a highly protected Lockean private sphere of individual rights allows both a democratic, participatory, social sphere to develop as well as a market economy virtually unfettered by regulation.² The democratic mythos of the framers argues that because of the dispersion of access points to political institutions, so too will power and coercion be dispersed. “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.”³ Taking on a variety of forms and filtered through political, social, and economic institutions, the framers thought that the clash over interests, inevitably tied to decisions regarding the distribution of violence, force, coercion, resources, and information would maintain democratic accountability for these decisions.

Thus the combination of coercive mechanisms securing and ordering society would be democratically accountable to the people. Legitimate harm, violence or coercion would be consented to through popular sovereignty. Yet in the U.S., only forms of political coercion are considered worthy of debates involving legitimacy. The debates around legitimacy ask whether it is legitimate that political institutions coerce or

ing structural violence by classifying the actions of racists or corporate officers as “deviant” or “criminal” rather than individuals trying to take advantage of the racism and classism endemic to contemporary American capitalism.

Measurable differences in bodily harm caused by economic, social and political institutions create structural violence as a complex of coercions not chosen by the self. In arguing for the ratification of the founding document of ordering society, the Constitution, Madison writes: “It is of great importance in a republic not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part.”⁴ But does American society live up to Madison’s ideal of justice for the republic? How does the media define and then portray the ability of all Americans to be free of “injustice”?

Structural Violence: The Complex of Coercions, Mobilizing Bias, and Intentional Institutional Development

Institutions have histories and paths that create and perpetuate structural violence. During founding moments, particular groups submerge the interests and the threat of others in favor of their own instantiation of power. Coercion and violence often play a role in these foundings. Appeals to order and security serve as the legitimation for submerging the interests of subordinate groups. In the United States, the founding document of governance institutionalized the direct violence of slavery and legitimated the long-term social-cultural violence of racism through the 3/5ths Compromise. It also institutionalized the separation of powers and the minimal state allowing the free market to develop unimpeded. The desire for the order and security of a strong market created the conditions for structural violence of the market to develop.

Because of the cultural taboos Americans have with an intrusive state, the same coercive pressures that organize more politically robust countries will be transformed into other kinds of coercive mechanisms. Elites accumulate power both horizontally and vertically. Power works horizontally through accumulating resources and information in the market and civil society. Maintaining order and security relies on both domination and exploitation. As Amitai Etzioni

argues, there are three kinds of resources power holders use to induce the cooperation of others: coercive, material and normative.⁵ An analysis of structural violence will involve all three of these resources and indeed collapse the material and normative resources into coercive mechanisms. Because both material resources and the ability to control normative values serve the interests of the powerful, they also serve to reinforce and create a system of structural violence.

Order is created politically through laws, law enforcement, and sustaining property relation by regularizing procedures and normalizing cultural mores into support for following these laws. Because security is both objective (by maintaining property relations economic security results by punishing criminals societal security results) and subjective (personal sense of well-being) we have to determine the legitimacy of ordering and security procedures and norms. In democratic societies, citizens should not be “forced” into



decisions with which they do not agree. Force implies the lack of choice. This work argues that the hedge of institutions where power and sovereignty are maintained, structures choice along certain paths that narrow and constrain the multiplicity of ones' choices—especially for those who fall into class and racial categories without access to these institu-

variable yet the most difficult to prove causally over time. This work attempts to prove the diachronic connections of "this" particular bodily harm being "caused" by these structural conditions. Secondly, structural violence works over time on a group level. In this work, the groups I will be looking at will be divided along both race and class lines. Looking

In making distinctions between types of structural violence legitimacy plays a key role, allowing certain applications of direct violence to be considered legitimate, while masking long-term structural violence by rules, procedures, and bureaucratic neutrality. Cultural institutions and social groups also frame the way dominant and subordinate groups

Additionally, any black man has a 6 to 8 times greater chance of being murdered than any white man. Concentrated poverty increases the probability of direct violence—thus incidences of direct violence are enabled by the structural violence of poverty and residential segregation.

tions. Thus force seems to be in a zero-sum relationship with choice: the more one is forced, the less choice one has.

Coercion then, seems to be the word between force and choice, because one can be willingly forced through coercion, and one can choose to force oneself through coercion. Yet in determining the legitimacy of coercion, harm is the normative, operational and objective factor to argue which coercions are acceptable and which are not. Certainly the bodily harm done through direct physical violence is more measurable and apparent than the harm done through long term cultural institutions like racism or sexism. Yet divisions between races, classes, and sexes do create measurable differences in both short term and long term bodily harm.⁶

As institutions move through history, power and the ability to enable violence, often work in tandem. Both serve the interests of ordering a secure society. Actual violence is minimized in favor of establishing rules and procedures that coerce individuals and groups into reducing incidences of arbitrary violence. Yet, because all institutions are founded in conflicts over power, winning groups structurally and historically accumulate power by channeling and prioritizing their material and psychological interests over those of the losing groups. From a systems theoretic standpoint, Luhmann argues that the exercise of power is always dependent upon a specific and symbiotic relationship to physical coercion. For Luhmann, violence asymmetrically structures society as an "avoidance alternative" that remains at the limits of power. Access to resources and information generated from power based on initial violent asymmetries have a cumulative effect for Luhmann. In the organic relationship between system and environment "the system is based on violence, but it is not thereafter to be controlled through violence."⁷ However, in that very founding, violence constitutes, limits and frames the use of power later in that institution's life. Thus individual acts of violence are enabled by a kind of structural violence. Members of the dominant institutionalized group accumulate protections from actual incidences of bodily harm given their structural location. Members of subordinate groups face bodily harm they might not even recognize as purposeful or violent given the temporal and structural origins of this harm.

In this work, violence is measured and defined differentially as direct or structural, where direct violence can sometimes be a species of a genus structural violence.⁸ As an unwanted force, acting on an individual, generated by human decision-making (rather than nature) where harmful intrusions impede one's ability to live, both structural and direct violence share similar effects (though not time similar time horizons). Direct violence is defined as an event rather than a process, perpetrated by individual actors rather than long-term structures and institutions. Intention is clear-cut. Determining agency is straightforward. Actual bodily harm results from the singular violent event. Yet structure too has an impact on individual behavior. Institutions and their legacies enable actual incidences of intentional, direct violence, while creating access to resources and information that indirectly affect one's ability to remain free from harmful intrusions. Operationalized as dependent variables, structural violence can be studied through three key and interrelated phenomena: actual bodily harm, epidemiological histories, and differential life-chances.

In terms of temporal ordering, the categories of structural violence can be seen through two different time periods—first, the synchronic, individual, empirically measurable level of bodily harm. Harm is the most concrete and empirical

at epidemiological histories will get to the way structure and institutions effect group health histories in terms of race and class.⁹

Finally, the most subjective of the variables, life chances will be operationalized as: the ability to use one's own decision-making to be happy, empowered, and having a faith in one's legitimate ability to control one's own life chances or, conversely, in a representative system, to give legitimation to others to control one's life chances. Anxiety and fear play a large part in determining one's life chances. As Franz Neumann argues, "anxiety is, or ought to be a central problem of the sciences. Anxiety impairs the freedom of decision, indeed it may make such freedom impossible—only a fearless man can decide freely."¹⁰

Long term, structural violence develops out of institutional paths constituted by the interaction of the state and the market on the one hand, and culture and social groups on the other. Political institutions create and police the limits to structural violence by enforcing laws, allocating resources, or mobilizing bias. Political institutions engage in vertical structural violence, limiting or expanding the range of coercive harms through state repression or through regulation that limits horizontal structural violence. Horizontal structural violence occurs in the institutions of society and the economy. Both social conflict and the structural violence of the market would be forms of horizontal structural violence.

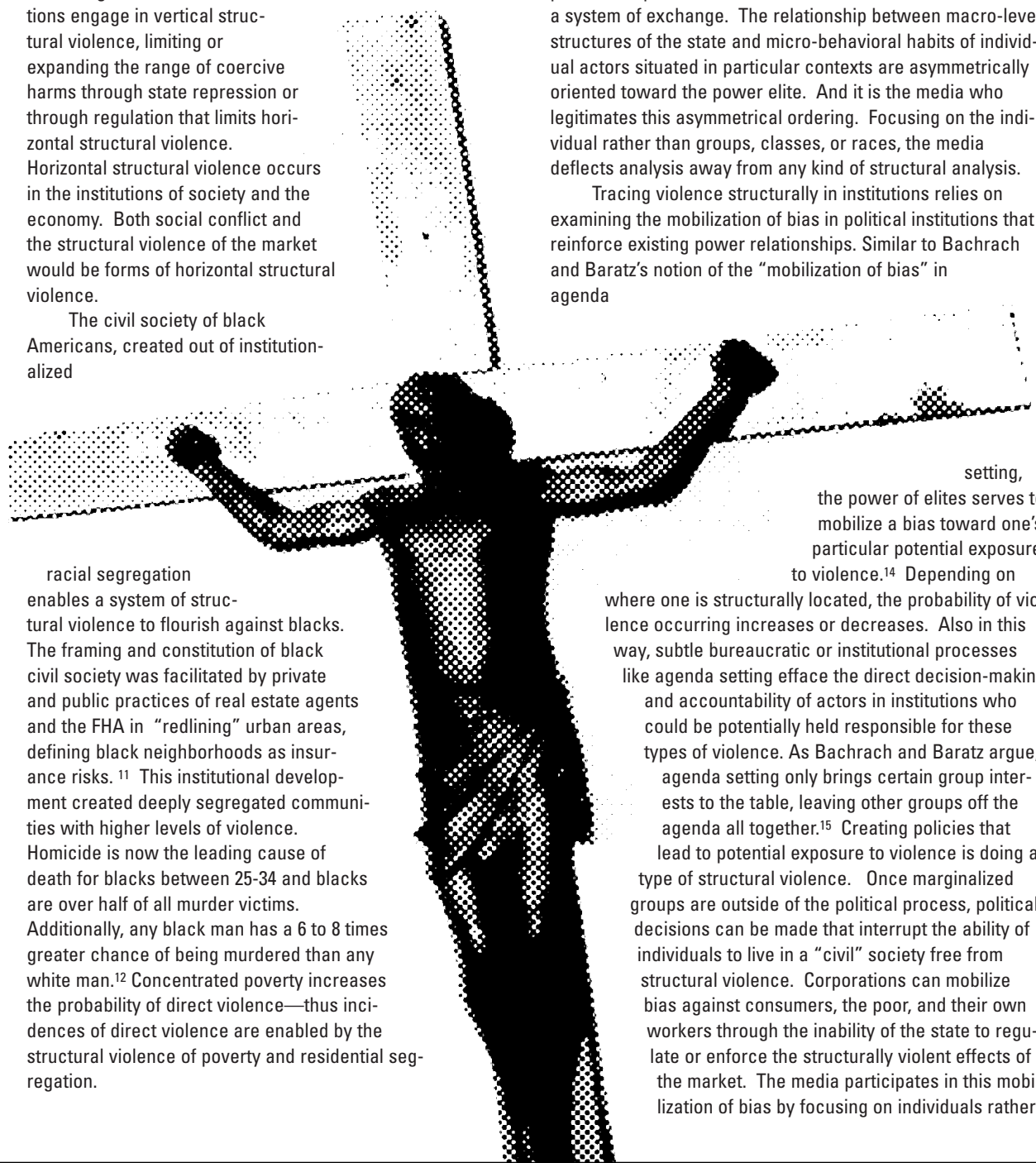
The civil society of black Americans, created out of institutionalized

racial segregation enables a system of structural violence to flourish against blacks. The framing and constitution of black civil society was facilitated by private and public practices of real estate agents and the FHA in "redlining" urban areas, defining black neighborhoods as insurance risks.¹¹ This institutional development created deeply segregated communities with higher levels of violence. Homicide is now the leading cause of death for blacks between 25-34 and blacks are over half of all murder victims. Additionally, any black man has a 6 to 8 times greater chance of being murdered than any white man.¹² Concentrated poverty increases the probability of direct violence—thus incidences of direct violence are enabled by the structural violence of poverty and residential segregation.

interact,¹³ supplying cultural resources which, when mobilized over long periods of time, facilitate the legitimation process. Indeed, the media is the largest cultural institution reinforcing and enabling the way we think about what types of harm are legitimate or illegitimate.

By controlling the behavior of both winning and losing groups, institutions create and police the boundaries of structural violence. Depending on where one is structurally located, limits are established where the probability of violent occurrences increases or decreases. Because sovereignty is split in the U.S. between institutions of society, the economy and politics, federalism has created a situation where the decisions made concerning the distribution of structural violence fall on state and local officials. Law enforcement, housing and zoning laws, state and local tax collection, and corporate collusion in urban politics all create forms of coercion and ultimately a system of structural violence. Protection against violence exists as a kind of social capital. Accumulated in institutional settings, protections against or potential exposures to violence on an individual level travel in a system of exchange. The relationship between macro-level structures of the state and micro-behavioral habits of individual actors situated in particular contexts are asymmetrically oriented toward the power elite. And it is the media who legitimates this asymmetrical ordering. Focusing on the individual rather than groups, classes, or races, the media deflects analysis away from any kind of structural analysis.

Tracing violence structurally in institutions relies on examining the mobilization of bias in political institutions that reinforce existing power relationships. Similar to Bachrach and Baratz's notion of the "mobilization of bias" in agenda



setting, the power of elites serves to mobilize a bias toward one's particular potential exposure to violence.¹⁴ Depending on

where one is structurally located, the probability of violence occurring increases or decreases. Also in this way, subtle bureaucratic or institutional processes like agenda setting efface the direct decision-making and accountability of actors in institutions who could be potentially held responsible for these types of violence. As Bachrach and Baratz argue, agenda setting only brings certain group interests to the table, leaving other groups off the agenda all together.¹⁵ Creating policies that lead to potential exposure to violence is doing a type of structural violence. Once marginalized groups are outside of the political process, political decisions can be made that interrupt the ability of individuals to live in a "civil" society free from structural violence. Corporations can mobilize bias against consumers, the poor, and their own workers through the inability of the state to regulate or enforce the structurally violent effects of the market. The media participates in this mobilization of bias by focusing on individuals rather

than on groups or capitalism as an oppressive structure en masse.

Multiple institutions had access to the creation and maintenance of order. Political, social and economic institutions maintain security and order differently. For Charles Tilly, coercion involves all non-legitimate applications of force that “cause loss or damage to the persons or possessions of individuals or groups who are aware of both the action and the potential damage.”¹⁶ Setting aside the questions of “unseen violence,” Tilly argues: “Where capital defines a realm of exploitation, coercion defines a realm of domination. The means of coercion center on armed force, but extend to facilities for incarceration, expropriation, humiliation, and publication of threats.”¹⁷ I argue that in contrast to European states, where coercion and capital became centralized through political institutions, in the United States, coercion and capital are

For instance, the structural violence of poverty developed out of capitalist economic relations. Yet policy makers, academics, and particularly the media attribute increased incidences of direct violence to the behavior of individuals rather than the structures that perpetuate, constitute, limit, and frame that behavior.

more horizontally located in society. Decentralized political structures facilitated centralization of capital yet fragmented the locus of sovereignty for the application of coercion. One major result of the fragmented, overlapping and horizontal applications of both exploitative and dominating institutions is the inability of Americans to see some types of violence and coercion as illegitimate.

Institutional paths develop where losing groups have little ability to change the long-term trajectory of the institution more toward their interests.¹⁸ Not having bureaucratic institutions pursuing a group’s interests (broadly construed) creates a structural situation and the institutional mechanisms of reproduction where the legitimation of certain forms of violence is continually maintained. Indeed, many forms of structural violence come to be seen as a part of everyday life and the “way things are,” while incidences of direct violence are explained by reverting to individualist descriptions of “deviant” criminals. For instance, the structural violence of poverty developed out of capitalist economic relations. Yet policy makers, academics, and particularly the media attribute increased incidences of direct violence to the behavior of individuals rather than the structures that perpetuate, constitute, limit, and frame that behavior.

Democratic Accountability—The Media’s Role in Determining What is Legitimate Coercion in the United States?

Coercion in the U.S. comes in a variety of forms, thus the definition of empirical instances of domination comes down to defining the difference between intended decisions and the unintended consequences of a series of decisions played out in institutions. Legitimacy is what we give to those who make decisions for us. We willingly cede our authority in making those decisions as we contract out of fear or from anxiety. Yet normatively, can we make a distinction between which coercive measures should be considered legitimate? How does the self decide which coercions we will accept? Legitimacy of self-coercion relies on analyzing the problem of structure vs. agency. If structure plays more of a dominant role in narrowing the choices individuals have, thus coercing oneself into following the laws is a different choice than coercing oneself into working in an unsafe factory.

Advanced capitalist societies promote a kind of rampant individualism that masks the unseen workings of the market—including those that are violent or coercive. Adam Smith called it the “hidden hand” of the market and Marx’s theory of individualism points to the alienation of one’s labor as a kind of harm that accumulates to workers over time in a capitalist system. In the wage labor contract made between workers and owners, Marx argues that workers are forced and coerced into a situation which ultimately brings harm on a large scale to a whole group of people. Workers as a whole suffer from the bias inherent in the system against them.

Because acquiring capital is based on a scarcity of resources, an unequal distribution of resources will lead to one group becoming dominant over another. It is this very individualism though, that is both a part of American exceptionalism and ironically, partially responsible for facilitating structural violence. Because Americans tend to see themselves as individuals, the long-term harm that accumulates in ascriptive cultural institutions, unequal economic institutions, and political institutions favoring the elite, come to be seen as an individual failure of meritocratic achievement.

Similarly, many theories of black politics in this country logically use Marx’s analysis to talk about the relationship of the individual to the group. Rather than an economic system that creates an unequal distribution of long-term harms, it is a cultural-economic system of racism that leads to a similar result. Overall, blacks in the U.S. face more possibilities of long-term, bodily harm in this country than do whites. It is the idea of an equality of opportunity (rather than equality of result) that gives weight to the fiction that workers and owners have equal power in the contracting process. The fiction that is believed is that each worker think of him/her self as an individual rather than as a member of a larger group. Similarly, moves by the power elite toward a “color-blind” society create a situation where blacks are seen as individuals rather than as part of a larger group, effected, influenced, exploited and oppressed by a larger system of capitalist-racist relations.

In civil society, cultural norms of identity and recognition as well as structural location serve to differentially locate groups in terms of potential exposure to violence. The media serves to reinforce these cultural norms. Here structural location limits, frames and constitutes one’s relationship to violence as a kind of structural-social capital. Culture acts as a resource for actors to perform roles, rites, and rituals framed structurally by political, economic, and social institutions. Yet culture also serves hegemonic interests by negotiating the dialectic of violence in everyday life. Political economy and the cultural institutions of civil society reciprocally interact through the criss-crossing patterns of capitalism, racism, and family life. Additionally, the cultural performance of violent rituals, in newscasts, through the totalization of “the society of the spectacle,” and through norms of class, race and sex, serve to reinforce the institutions of American society founded on violence.

Actors are located in institutions with a potential but differential exposure to both bodily harm and subtle psycho-cultural-discursive levels of social violence. Access to both information and resources may potentially minimize an actor’s exposure to violence. Our narratives, discourse, and the way we embody living in America negotiate levels of potential exposure to violence. Blacks negotiate the level of violence as social capital in the increased probability of violence in residentially segregated neighborhoods, while women face violence as negative social capital living in a rape culture. In turn, access to resources and information relies on both structural and cultural locations played out in class, race, and sex identities. Culture writes or marks the embodiments of actors, and thus their views on violence and legitimacy, in a certain way in relation to the hegemonic discourse of upper/middle class white males. The media is able to channel these roles effectively through the facade that each individual is like every other. Because certain forms of violence are permitted according to cultural mores and narratives, different intersections of identities have asymmetrical relationships to legitimate or illegitimate forms of violence. Bar-fights are seen as legitimate heroic struggles. Criminal violence or violence to property is seen as illegitimate. Violence toward blacks or women, while legally illegitimate, still retains a level of cultural legitimacy. Because the media portrays these violent acts as individual events, the broader structures of capi-

talism, sexism and racism that create the conditions for this violence to occur are not analyzed.

The media thrives on violence. In our “society of the spectacle,” violence sells. Whether it is the socially sanctioned violence of sport—boxing, football, and wrestling being the most spectacular displays of controlled or socially sanctioned violence—or the nightly broadcasts of violence, crime, bloodshed, war, and atrocities, the media feeds off the violence of late capitalism. Yet the structural violence done by legally treating corporations as individuals, enacting policies that contribute to a racist criminal justice system, where certain groups are able to “mobilize bias” against subordinate groups, harming and coercing members of that group comes under the guise of legitimate procedure because of the media focus on individuals. ◀

¹ This work will not address the type of coercion and structural violence faced by women. In many ways, gender and sex are unique categories for analysis, particularly given the variables I am using in determining structurally violent effects. Except to note the importance of such a study, at this point, I will put aside any and all questions of the way coercion, harm and structural violence work through gender.

² I am mixing sociology’s three well-used solutions to the problem of order—coercion, inducing behavior through protecting mutual self-interest, and forming normative consensual views—roughly corresponding to the theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. See Dennis Wrong’s *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, pg. 9.

³ Madison, John. *The Federalist Papers* #51, ed. Clinton Rossiter, New York: Mentor, pg. 290.

⁴ Ibid, pg. 291.

⁵ Amitai Etzioni in *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, New York: The Free Press, 1961, pp. 5-6.

⁶ This work will not address the issue of whether violence can accumulate psychologically as Andrea Dworkin implies in her “Words that Wound” piece. Harm however, can accumulate psychologically which then can have a cumulatively violent effect over a longer period of time in terms of epidemiological history.

⁷ Luhmann, Niklas. *Trust and Power*, trans. Howard Davis, John Raffan and Kathryn Rooney, New York: John Wiley and Sons, pg. 151

⁸ Galtung, Johan. “Cultural Violence,” in *Violence and Its Alternatives*, ed. Manfred Steger and Nancy Lind, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999, pp. 40-43.

⁹ See Polednak, Anthony. *Segregation, Poverty, and Mortality in Urban African Americans*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, for the argument that the epidemiological histories of blacks shows racism has an impact on black health.

¹⁰ Neumann, Franz. “Anxiety and Politics,” in *The Democratic and The Authoritarian State: Essays in Political and Legal Theory*, ed. Herbert Marcuse, New York: The Free Press, 1957, pp. 270-301

¹¹ Massey, Douglas S. and Denton, Nancy A. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

¹² Marable, Manning. *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000, pp. 123, 125.

¹³ Scott, James. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven: Yale, 1990.

¹⁴ Bachrach, Peter and Baratz, Morton. “Two Faces of Power,” in *Classic Readings in American Politics*, ed. Pietro Nivola and David Rosenbloom, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1992*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwells, 1992, pg. 19

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Moe, Terry. “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure,” in John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson eds., *Can the Government Govern*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1989.

MIMI GUYEN

PINB ALLW IZARD

Letras & Resistencia
out the world
INTERNATIONAL
ATTENTION

Pinball Wizard

AN INTERVIEW WITH MIMI NGUYEN

With the downturn of riot-grrrl and the advent of post-riot-grrrl, the scene's participants found little to hold onto. Some burnt out, dropped out, and then faded away into obscurity. Others made a career out of it. Some rode out its chic into new outlets, sprouting genres similar in ideology, but with a brand new aesthetic. Mimi Nguyen took her background to a legitimate educational institution.

While attending graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, Mimi Nguyen combined her academia with the zine world, continuing her projects that explore the conventional political topics of racism, sexism, and homophobia, but critically analyzing them far past any lyric sheet ever did. Her drive to look past the sloganeering challenged punk rockers who were comfortable with their activism and thus, made her a notorious voice within the punk community and beyond.

Currently an ABD (all but dissertation) in Comparative Ethnic Studies with a Designated Emphasis in Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Mimi's projects include the ongoing *Slander* zine and two compilation zines called *Evolution of a Race Riot* (1&2). Her website WorseThanQueer.com is frequently updated with resources and writings.

Mimi is also a regular contributor to the longstanding *MaximumRocknRoll*, a *Punk Planet* columnist, and writes for poppolitics.com. Academically, she has several published essays in various anthologies: *Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life*, *Asian-America.net*, and *Topographies of Race and Gender*. She is co-editing two collections: *Performing Unnatural Acts: Critical Circuits of Race and Sexuality*, and another about Asian-American popular culture.

The age-old question still remains: are punk rockers inherently political? Do the two go hand in hand like Billy Bob and Angelina? If so, what comes first? The social belonging or "the cause"? If not, why bother?

Interview by Vincent Chung



MR: First, how would you describe yourself as an activist?

I have a love-hate relationship with seeing myself as an activist. While I was an activist in the more obvious sense for a number of years organizing clinic defense, et cetera, I became frustrated with the constant reinforcement of a theory/practice split. And the longer I thought about strategies and tactics, the more concerned I became about this imagined theory/practice split, because it seemed to me that so much of what I did and said as an activist was woefully under-theorized. And I become frustrated with the rhetoric of, “We have to stop talking and start acting,” or “Theory is useless, practice is revolutionary” because these appeared to me to be so frustratingly wrong-headed.

One, because there’s an element of vanguardism in such sentiments, and two, because underneath all actions

about their attempts to interject some critical thinking in the organizing process and being told that there’s no time, no energy, for theory, because the situation is always imagined to be more immediate, more urgent. Yes, you could argue that a bullet to the head is more “real” than theory or words, that the bullet transcends language. But does it? (This is an analogy I’m borrowing from Gayatri Spivak, a postcolonial feminist theorist, by the way.) What is the reason for the bullet? Who kills whom? Who has access to the bullet? Why the bullet at all? Answering these questions, we can’t avoid theory, because theory is what makes sense of what is happening at any given historical moment. Theory describes the emergence of ideologies, movements, and regulations. Theory helps us understand what meanings we attach to actions, what discourses inform our everyday lives, in complex ways. We need

through the world, but that I didn’t have an analysis of it just vague sensations of injustice, you know, like it wasn’t fair, etc., until I was a teenager.

The work I did as a clinic defender and reproductive rights activist affected me the most, because the violence of anti-abortion discourse was so frightening. The sense of the threat—the threat of violence, the threat of explosive violence—seemed to veer so often into the realm of promise. And of course, it did. During the time I did this work, the protests and blockades were matched by bullets left on clinic doorsteps, burning tires thrown through windows, et cetera. The anti’s produced “WANTED” posters for doctors who performed abortions, and of course now they’re posting on-line personal information (driver’s license, car license, home addresses, children’s

And there’s a lot of racism, misogyny, and homophobia in punk rock. I wouldn’t want to argue that those things are “not really” punk because they’ve been there since its inception. Punk rock needs to own that history of reproducing power and privilege instead of pretending that it’s not deeply woven into its cultural fabric.

and all practices there is a theory about how the world works, or why something is. It’s simply not recognized as such, but quite frankly, theory, or some kind of ideological framework, is not an optional extra. Something guides us, and something guides those groups and individuals that activists oppose and seek to recruit; the question is, do we make the effort to understand the why and how of it? Or do we take the easy option, and say, “Sometimes it’s just about racism, or it’s just about capitalism,” as if these things were uncomplicated, obvious, or monolithic? Which of course they’re not, and to approach these problems as if it were a simple matter of explaining it clearly and reasonably is short-sighted.

For instance, we can explain clearly and reasonably that a fetus is not a person, but the subtle and overt cues in Western culture make it difficult to line such an argument up against the kind of excessive sentimentality attached to fetuses and families. How do we deconstruct the latter to make a space for new ways of thinking about the issues of sexuality, reproduction, et cetera? These are the kinds of questions I like to ask. They’re questions to make it harder to act without thinking because they’re questions meant to undermine assumptions; but I’d like to think that they’re questions that will make our politics more meaningful and democratic.

So I think that as the kind of theorist I am, I am also a kind of activist. And of course I believe that it’s important that we continue to mobilize under certain banners, “social justice” or whatever, but I also like to think I can be the nagging voice that argues that a minimal explanation or a mere directive is too problematic, too little to let pass. Though that also isn’t to say that I wouldn’t still be an activist in the conventional sense; and if I ever went back to it I’d probably work on women’s health care access again.

MR: Many activists are hell-bent on actions taking stances from a black and white absolute world, which is probably the largest fault of progressive activism...how do activists feel when you dispute their claims? Well, not dispute, but what happens when you add more bulk to their arguments which renders a little more thought? How does all this make you feel in regards to the recent resurgence of activism?

Well, there’s the “less talk, more rock!” reaction, which is always dangerous to me. I don’t know why they would necessarily have to be diametrically opposed. It seems to me that to silence the “talk” because it supposedly detracts from the “rock” is so prescriptive. What could be more authoritarian or arrogant than speaking of the “revolution” as a series of commands, as the closure of debate or questioning?

But I don’t really get a reaction—not to my face—because I’m no longer involved in organizing for just these reasons. Friends of mine still come to me with horror stories

to allow for complexity—what do we have if we don’t?

Unfortunately, I think we may see in some instances the “same old, same old” re-merging with the recent wave of anti-globalization activism. A trans[gender] friend of mine was recently arrested for going into the “wrong” bathroom during the anti-World Economic Forum protests in New York City. The reaction from the Indymedia messageboards was one of shocking ignorance and hostility toward him, full of condescending and contradictory suggestions about how he should have just adhered to “normal social behavior” and so forth. So all these so-called radicals were quickly participating in the policing of his gender-defiant body without making the necessary connections to the policing of bodies along gender and sexual (as well as racial and class) norms by transnational capital and social forces writ large, which they were supposedly so opposed to. It reminded me of the New Left’s reaction to feminist and queer concerns in the 1960s and 1970s—radical but only so far that it doesn’t force them to critically interrogate their hegemonic assumptions or their exercises of social power.

MR: At what point did you feel like you had issues to campaign? Or better phrased, when did race become an issue to you? Feminism? Sexuality?

This is something like asking for a coming-out story, isn’t it? Like, “At this moment, looking at the Sears underwear catalog with my friend Missy, I realized I liked girls.” While I became consciously political in high school, race has always been a determining condition. I grew up in a white, working-class or lower middle-class neighborhood in central Minnesota and not only was I not white, but I was obviously alien: we were refugee poor and refugee awkward. My English properly jarred, as well as my incomplete grasp on social rules. I was also a tomboy and my first celebrity crush was on Annie Lennox (The Eurythmics).

It was in high school however that I adopted a certain political lens through which to view these events, thoughts, whatever; I don’t know how it happened, there wasn’t a bolt of lightening or a particular book that I can definitively say pushed me, but all of a sudden it seemed as if everything I checked out of the library was about feminism. It sort of snowballed from there; I organized food and clothing drives for women’s shelters, I discovered realpolitick in the pages of *MaximumRocknRoll* when I was fifteen, and floundered without a theoretical framework until I got to college and took a transnational feminist theory class, and it all exploded. This taught me the importance of critically mapping circuits of power at the moment or site of their exercise.

So I suppose you could say that all these things made up the conditions that effected how I got to move

schools) about not just the doctors or clinic workers, but also clients. And I felt a real fear for my body—not only in terms of being out in front of the clinics, but of losing control of what I could do with my body. And my reproductive rights activism led me to some of the scholarship I do now, interrogating the sentimentality attached to fetal imagery, biological reproduction and heterosexual relations.

MR: Growing up in such an awkward environment probably contributed to alternative ways of thinking and living...so which came first: activism or punk rock?

Activism, but just barely. I had a lot of punk rock precursors around me, in the form of skaters and alternateens. Although I have to say that when I first saw mohawked, leather-jacketed punks on t.v. (the ’80s version of youth-gone-bad) terrorizing high school populations and decent, law-abiding American citizens I knew what I wanted to be. (I was ten or eleven at the time, and of course, I also wanted to be an astronaut or a superhero.) But at fifteen I did go the way of the punk rock, and it saved my life in suburban San Diego. It gave me politics (anti-apartheid, anti-corporate, anti-state, anti-war) and music to match my moods. And they quickly became so enmeshed that it was hard to separate them out. Which isn’t to say that punk rock didn’t save me, but then I needed to be saved from punk rock.

MR: You have been adamant about the dissolution between punk rock and the politics it once paraded, to the point that you were compiling a brief article for *MaximumRocknRoll*. Would you care to elaborate on your views on that?

It’s not so much that punk lost its politics, which is what I once believed, but that I wrongly attributed too much progressive politics to punk rock. There’s a subtle difference. I was attached to the tail-end of the anarchist punk movement of the 1980s and then riot grrrl, and between these two I developed a contradictory position on politics and punk rock: on the one hand, punk was inherently political (e.g., thus giving rise to riot grrrl), and on the other, punk wasn’t political enough (e.g., thus giving rise to riot grrrl). I still think both these things are true in different ways, but I’ve learned to expect nothing from punk rock. It helps to consider myself a punk rock expatriate. In fact, there are several of us who half-jokingly, half-seriously identify as such; Lauren Martin made us all patches, which is of course very punk!

MR: So you would still admit to having roots ingrained in the “punk” lifestyle?

Well, lifestyle sounds a bit more “dedicated” than I am. I certainly used to be more recognizably punk rock—fucked-up

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hair, black jeans, black tank top, black canvas boots—but that seems so arbitrary. My friend Rachel was punk rock in children's dinosaur print skirts she made herself. This crustie boy who allegedly had a crush on me when I was punker on the outside, supposedly sighed when he saw me more recently, as if I had died. Nice to know it didn't have anything to do with my personality!

If I had to describe my lifestyle, it would be "geeky graduate student." I'm not very good at being a regular "adult," but I don't know that I'm the greatest punk rocker either. I still listen to a lot of punk rock, and I tend toward the older bands, and of course, riot grrrl-era music. I love God Is My Co-Pilot, X (Australia), The Ex, Huggy Bear. All my plates don't match, I don't do laundry often enough, I wear the same clothes for days at a time, and I have friends who are punk rockers (who play Dungeons and Dragons, but that's another story). I did get a lot of great stories and fuzzy, vegan-leather-and-leopard-print memories out of punk, and I would never pretend like I didn't have fun. I don't want to say I grew out of it, but I did grow away.

At this point I wouldn't even begin to try to define punk rock as anything more than a musical genre with its roots in rock 'n roll, I think, and an independent economy of producers, distributors, and consumers. I don't necessarily think that's radical in and of itself, because it's difficult to think through what this means without referencing the

Americanist ideology of entrepreneurship and rugged individualism, but that's another story. I wouldn't want to prescribe what counts as a "punk rock" politic or consciousness. There are so many things I used to think I could take for granted within punk rock that I can't anymore, like a critique of late capitalism and the logic of consumption, or the absence of typical rock star-audience relations. And there's a lot of racism, misogyny, and homophobia in punk rock. I wouldn't want to argue that those things are "not really" punk because they've been there since its inception. Punk rock needs to own that history of reproducing power and privilege instead of pretending that it's not deeply woven into its cultural fabric.

MR: As a graduate student, you seem to take a strong leaning towards academia's mixings with punk rock. Sometimes to the point of argument. Why is it important? Why do punks feel that academic institutions are unpunk?

It's no doubt

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some part reaction, and some part reason. The reaction being, "School sucks, it's so authoritarian to have a teacher tell you what to think!" and the reason being, "Academic institutions are hopelessly implicated in the functioning of a capitalist culture and the nation-state." And of course, it sometimes seems that being smart (or political) is unpunk.

The reason is certainly true, but on the other hand there is almost nowhere we can operate that is not an institutional environment of some kind. And I don't think it's worth it to give up this very contradictory, very complicated space where so much meaning gets made, gets transmitted, for the sake of being politically "pure." Otherwise, who or what is providing the metaphors to explain how the world works? As an academic I want to be able to suggest other metaphors, other perhaps more critical lenses for looking, which is the same reason that I write as much as I do for so many different kinds of media.

I don't feel the need to be pure, or hold with any discourse which attempts to breed guilt, because these can too often become

a position of comfort and arrogance.

You (well, maybe not you personally) might be surprised by the number of punks and ex-punks in academia. Interestingly, I think most of us who fall into that category are there for the same reasons, a mixture of intellectual curiosity and political commitment. What the shape or form of this curiosity or commitment takes is hardly uniform; I feel certain that a punk rock acquaintance in my department disapproves of my lack of "revolutionary" fervor, but we're still friends. In any case, I'm skeptical of anyone who believes they have the program that will necessarily lead to social justice.

MR: Do you feel that academia is misinterpreted? How would you rather prefer to perceive academia? Has the academic institution arena given you a fair chance on expounding radical thoughts or have you had lots of obstacles? Or could it be that you're at UC-Berkeley?

Academia can be a wonderful space of intellectual growth, collaboration and stimulation, but it can also be a space of hostility and heart-crushing competitiveness. There are tons of hoops to jump through, tests to prove you're "worthy." Of course, any social structure produces its own rules, including the punk rock hierarchy.

I've been supported all throughout my academic

career, barring the usual slew of self-interested professors who can't be bothered with students. It helps that I've been involved with interdisciplinary fields like women's studies and cultural studies that are generally left leaning, and interested in subcultural production and critical inquiry. I don't think that's particular to Berkeley as an institution, which is quite conservative, as much as it is the departments and scholars I've managed to work with over the years.

MR: What happens with punks/ex-punks in academia? How does that change your environment? Does it bring a sense of familiarity ("Hey, let's talk about that Red Monkey band!") or is it an invasion of progression ("I never thought I would have to talk about Bratmobile again!")?

I generally like finding out about the punks or ex-punks in academia, because I don't necessarily feel that punk rock is something I have to repudiate, or something I have to pretend I never did. I have friends who act like punk rock was something to be ashamed of, and I don't personally understand why you'd want to pretend that the funnest years of your life never happened. And for me it's nice, because I think punk rockers learn to socialize differently than other subcultures or "youth" cultures, and I often feel like I don't know all the right cues in regular conversation.

For others it does feel like an invasion, and they want to push this past as far away from themselves as possible, and remake themselves in another image. I have a friend who wants to be "normal," and by that I mean he wanted to present an image of himself that seems to be bought wholesale from a catalog or the *New York Times* lifestyle section, and I kept reminding him that he used to wear eyeliner and a mohawk and dirty Neurosis t-shirts. I wanted him to come to terms with punk rock, to just own it, but he just wanted to be a whole different kind of person. Finally, we stopped hanging out altogether. I'm still sad about it, but it was becoming



difficult to continue our friendship based on these eight year-old memories of sleeping on the Epicenter couches, listening to The Ex, or roaming the City at three a.m..

MR: How do you react when you're criticized by punks who think you're not revolutionary enough? Or even contradictory in your beliefs?

I don't much care. Who is never contradictory? And did I ever call myself a revolutionary? Not seriously. I explain my position like this: there was a Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault debate a decade or so ago, in which they argued the nature of justice and revolution. Chomsky argued that "justice" was an objective reality, a universal ideal and realizable goal. Foucault argued that such a position actually de-politicized the question of how the concept of "justice" operates in complex and contradictory ways, how it's used by different factions in a contest for power, and how our understanding of "justice" is a matter of political and ideological production and that it's vitally, crucially important that we map this at any given historical moment. I tell those who would argue with me about my politics from a "revolutionary" stance that I'm a Foucauldian. Politics is never a cut-and-dry matter—you can't universalize a program for revolution and force every situation into the mold.

MR: So what is *Slander*? What is it about?

Slander is the latest incarnation of the fanzine I've been doing for ten years now. It's not a personal zine or a political zine in the usual sense; it's more like a critical journal for thinking through the personal and the political, their intersections, their implications, their embeddedness. Very much in the spirit of the

scene, whether or not I abandoned punk rock for a while or for good. So I decided to do a compilation zine about race, by people of color; I started in 1995, and the first issue finally came out in 1997.

There was nothing yet in place that might have served as an informal network, only vague rumors and tenuous connections (friends of friends who'd heard of so-and-so). I must have sent out hundreds of postcards, many of which were returned, mailing addresses no longer in service, or never answered, lost in the mail or simply torn into pieces or ignored. I was looking to do two things: 1) create some skeleton network of people of color, and 2) manage a nuanced critique of racism in punk rock beyond the simplified pronouncements ("Nazis suck") and inadequate analyses ("We're all united by punk rock, color doesn't matter"). Many of the writers who eventually made their way into the compilation expressed the sense of being isolated in their frustration—or, having never considered the issue of "race" before in their punk rock or other surroundings, found themselves

dealing with disappointment, or rage. I wanted to provide a context for all these monologues and conversations alike.

PINBALL ALLOW IZARD

MR: From this interview, some may gather a representation of you as a fierce pissed-off, and humorless bitch. You have fun though, right? What do you do?

It's so bizarre to me that being critically-minded somehow equals dullsville. There's all kinds of pleasure, and we all operate on so many different levels, why assume that any one part of us is necessarily the whole?

I'm actually a big geek. I read comic books, and not just the "smart" ones. I'm in the process of finding every issue of Marvel that features Karma, a former New Mutant. I also read a lot of children's and young adult books, most of them in the science fiction/fantasy vein. My favorite authors are Phillip Pullman, Garth Nix, Diane Wynne Jones, Octavia Butler, Connie Willis, Ursula LeGuin, Jeanette Winterson. I also have dance parties with the cat. We love New Wave.

And I love pinball. Monster Bash, Medieval Madness and South Park are my favorite machines. The older Star Wars machines are fun too. We're going to a pinball extravaganza in a few weeks; we pay a flat fee and we get to play endless pinball on machines from the 1950s to the latest in holographic whatever. And icki just bought an old school, 1970s Charlie's Angels machine, but we don't have room for it in the apartment, so it's currently taking up space in a *MaximumRocknRoll* reviewer room. The both of us also love photobooth pictures, so we're always trekking to this arcade with the best black & white photobooths with hats and outfits. And I love Gauntlet (the video game). We lose so many quarters to that machine.

Icki [Mimi's boyfriend, sorry gals and bros!] and I also travel a lot. We like exploring small towns, urban landscapes, downtowns, roadside attractions, theme parks, whatever. We drive out of our way to ride roller coasters and visit oddities museums.

MR: Pardon my ignorance about pinball, but what makes a good machine?

I'm hardly a connoisseur, and most days I suck. There are machines, however, which have better architecture (for lack of a better word) than others—the ball flows better, and at the same time there are more switches, more ramps, whatever, to keep the game in constant motion. I don't like the newfangled

Years ago I decided that I wanted—or needed—a conversation about race that wasn't dominated by liberal platitudes, romances with exoticism, race traitors or racist cool. I needed it if I was going to justify to myself my participation in this scene, whether or not I abandoned punk rock for a while or for good. So I decided to do a compilation zine about race, by people of color; I started in 1995, and the first issue finally came out in 1997.

best zines to emerge from a post-riot grrrl moment, including *Subject to Change*, *Quantify*, *External Text*, and *Mamasita*.

MR: Tell us more about the upcoming *Evolution of a Race Riot*!

It took me forever because I was teaching and studying for my qualifying exams at the same time I was trying to put together this second compilation. My commitment to the project wavered depending on how much work I had to do on, say, my lectures or my position papers.

MR: You still need to tell us about it! What is it (to people not familiar with *Race Riot*)? Who's in it? What is it going to do?

Years ago I decided that I wanted—or needed—a conversation about race that wasn't dominated by liberal platitudes, romances with exoticism, race traitors or racist cool. I needed it if I was going to justify to myself my participation in this

What I eventually finished was an experiment in "by, for, and about" people of color in, around, or on their way out of punk rock. (Along with original writing, I reprinted essays and excerpts from defunct or hard-to-find zines, ones that had gone out-of-print, or had only printed twenty, or fifty.) I was angry, bored with punk rock—doing the *Race Riot* redeemed my participation in my own eyes, in part.

I recently finished a second issue (also a compilation) that comes with a project directory of all the zines, mailorders, et cetera, I could find that were produced or run by people of color. Some of it's historical—a lot of the zines listed aren't being made anymore—but it's importance, I think, is the fact that it's meant as an archive. There's a slew of people involved: Bianca Ortiz (*Mamasita*), Jose Palafox (*Struggle, Bread and Circuits*), Athena Tan (*Framing Historical Theft*), Lauren Martin (*You Might As Well Live, Quantify*), and lots, lots more.

pinball machines with the holograms, like the Episode I or Attack From Mars machines. For some reason the boards are so wide open, that there's not a lot to play the ball off of. I'm particular to pinball machines with wooden backboards, but barring that, I love the South Park machine because multiball with Mr. Hanky always cracks me up. And the voice that says, "Super Fart Bumpers" makes my day. ◀

Mimi Nguyen can be found at www.worsethanqueer.com. Some of her zines can be found through Pander distro: panderzinedistro.com or send \$1 ppd to Pander Zine Distro, POB 582142, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2142.

Chiapas, Mexico



Chiapas, Mexico (November 2001)

In November of 2001 I traveled with Alvaro Carraro, a Uruguayan writer and filmmaker, to Chiapas, Mexico. We were working with Doctors Without Borders (MSF / Médecins Sans Frontières), initiating what is to be a longer-term project there, documenting the indigenous communities, with special attention given to the communities in resistance (i.e., the Zapatista communities). Our belief is that the health situation of this Mexican state is an excellent indicator of the region's deeper problems, working under the assumption that, generally, a region will not have alarming health deficiencies, while maintaining high levels of education and literacy, and providing ample, well-paying work opportunities. Instead, our feeling is that these are problems which all walk hand in hand, and that the neglected people are neglected wholly, while the larger, bigoted, and corrupted state-structures work only to assist a select group. The health situation thus becomes an excellent path to follow into the communities and their larger struggles.

MSF, the organization which was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1999, is midway through a three year project to halt the spread of blindness caused by the eye affliction trachoma. Trachoma develops over decades, initially swelling the eyelid, and then causing the eyelid to turn in, toward the eyeball, bringing the sufferer's lashes in contact with the surface of their eye. The horribly painful scraping of the lashes against the eye generates heavy scarring. As the scar tissue accumulates on the eye, the sufferer's vision becomes increasingly impaired, and, eventually, the person is blinded completely. Most sufferers will try to alleviate their pain by plucking their lashes, but the lashes grow back, and the new hairs are like short needles, which drag tortuously across the eye. MSF is working in Chiapas with two doctors from the town of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. They are performing minor surgeries on patients suffering from the advanced stages of trachoma. The doctors make a single slit across the eyelid, and with a few simple stitches are able to rotate the eyelid back into its normal position.

The crime here is that trachoma is highly preventable. One need only wash one's face and hands regularly and the risk of infection is eliminated. One handful of water can wash three faces, which is important in the trachoma regions of Chiapas which suffer from extreme water shortages during much of the year. Trachoma is found solely within the indigenous communities, and this is not due to a genetic predisposition, but instead it is a direct result of the institutional neglect that these communities have suffered for centuries. In the highlands region of Chiapas, to the north of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, between ten and twelve percent of the area's 130,000 inhabitants suffers from some stage of trachoma. Until MSF came in, there was no one organization (state or NGO) that was willing to spend the minimal amount of time, energy, or money required to speak with the indigenous communities about trachoma, to educate them about their general health, or to ultimately initiate some form of action to address the many preventable medical problems. With recent public awareness campaigns and a local media-blitz, MSF has been able to coerce the state Ministry of Health into a coalition working to eradicate trachoma in the region, with the ultimate goal of the MSF project being that the state MoH will, at the end of the three-year MSF commitment, continue the trachoma eradication on its own.

On this same trip to Chiapas we were invited by the Zapatista council of the autonomous municipality of San Manuel to meet with them in a town called Emiliano Zapata, in the Las Cañadas region. After our interview we were permitted to spend the small remainder of the afternoon visiting with the community, which has been living in resistance since the uprising in 1994. The communities in resistance refuse all aid from the federal government, and have been without real medical assistance for the past eight years. (In truth, they had received appallingly little medical assistance prior to the uprising, so they were starting, eight years ago, at an already desperate level of neglect.) MSF is only just beginning to gain the trust of these autonomous Zapatista communities, and are required to earn that trust one small community at a time, so it is a long, slow road that they are traveling, but ultimately, with each successful integration of an MSF team into a community, the positive word of mouth from one community to the next will make subsequent integrations easier.

Why then, one should finally ask, is MSF working in Mexico at all? MSF is perhaps best known for their work in conflict regions and war zones. And Mexico, many North Americans would suggest, is not at war. However, for hundreds of thousands of indigenous Mexicans (and Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, Brazilians . . .) the wars that arrived five hundred years ago with the Spanish (and the Portuguese, etc.) have never ended. These indigenous populations have been marginalized. They have been oppressed, neglected, and barred from participating in *any* of the thousands of decisions that have directly effected their communities, and which have brought a sizable profit to a handful of concerned parties in Mexico City, the United States, and Europe. After centuries of being forced from their traditional lands to always less-arable regions, after being pushed away from the same types of natural water ways and sources that traditionally sustain every population, the indigenous communities of southern Mexico have finally struggled their way out onto the world-stage, and are demanding—loudly—the same fundamental rights that the Mexican and U.S. constitutions boast of for every woman and man.

In 2001 the Mexican government passed a deeply flawed indigenous rights bill, which the Zapatistas have rejected, digging in their heels for a longer, ever more tiring, struggle. Unfortunately there has been a far-reaching misconception, disseminated with great effort by the Mexican government, that after the much-publicized Zapatista march from Chiapas to Mexico City in early 2001, and the passing of the (flawed) indigenous rights bill, that all is well in southern Mexico. However, it is now, almost more than ever, that our attentions should be focused southward, as 40% of the Mexican military is stationed in this one Mexican state, and the Zapatista communities struggle still harder for recognition, and fundamental rights.

-m. rhoades (June 2002)
33ram.org

weblinks / resources :
<http://www.msf.org>
<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>

Genova, Italy

23 July 2002

Exactly one year ago, I was arrested, together with two friends, while protesting against the G8-summit in Genova, Italy. We spent eighteen days on remand before we were released and deported. Today, after twelve months, all we know is what our Italian lawyer told us: "the investigations are continuing and there will be a trial...someday."

The protests against the G8-summit in Genova took place from Friday, 19 July through Saturday, 21 July, 2001. More than 100,000 people from all over the world participated in the migrant-demonstration on Thursday, the various actions on Friday, and the big closing demonstration on Saturday.

Police-forced violence reached a new level, culminating in the execution of Carlo Giuliani on Friday, 19 July. On that day, we got separated during the demonstration and were not able to find the fourth person of our group. The following three days were dominated by our effort to find our friend. With the help of lawyers and people from the independent media center, we called hospitals, checked lists of arrested people, did simply everything we could—but all without luck.

We decided to wait until Tuesday to see if our friend would come to our agreed meeting place. (When a person gets arrested in Italy, there's an extension of three days, then the police have to set that person free or keep that person in jail for much longer. That three day's grace period was due to expire on Monday.) We stayed in Genova to wait. The independent media center was open until Sunday and, together with the parking lot where our camper was, it was the only possible meeting point with our friend.

On Monday afternoon, the police checked us twice. The first time, they only asked us for our ID cards and left. Later, when we returned from a walk on the beach at around 21:30, we found our camper with all its doors and the hood already open. A tire had been flattened and the car was blocked in by police cars. The courteous officers of the afternoon had been replaced by a bunch of carabinieri*. They confiscated almost all of our belongings. With insults and the first act of physical violence—a blow with a metal stick on the upper arm—they brought us to bolzanetto police station. Right after we entered the building, they began to kick and punch us. More than ten cops yelled commands we couldn't understand (because they were in Italian). We were then guided into a small room where they went on with beating us up. All in all we spent seven hours in that police station

before they brought us to jail...seven hours of massive maltreatment resulting in two completely swollen eyes, detailed imprints of their special fighting gloves on our faces, a big hematoma on one of our arms, boot print bruises, bloody legs, elbows, lips etc.

In jail, they took our fingerprints and photos. After that we were divided into two jail cells. Me and a friend were put in one, and our other friend was put in a cell with a strange prisoner (who luckily turned out to be quite nice). The jail was for illegal immigrants waiting for their deportation and folks with lower sentences. We were not allowed to leave our cells until Thursday, 26 July and we had absolutely no contact with the outside world. Our relief at the relatively humane/non-violent treatment we received in the jail gradually changed into fear of a harsh sentence. On Thursday, in the evening, representatives of the German Bundestag and the German Consulate visited us. We were so happy that there was someone who knew about us! They promised to inform our parents and engage a lawyer for us.

But the next day changed our mood from optimistic to desperate once again. We were presented to the examining magistrate, and he revealed the accusations made against us:

1. Members of the black bloc
2. Violent vandalism
3. Violence against police forces
4. Trying to escape during the arrest
5. Resistance to carabinieri during the arrest

There were no pictures, no video-material to justify those accusations, just our confiscated stuff [black clothes, tool for the camper etc.]. After interviewing us one by one, the judge decided to prolong the remand because of points 4 and 5. He wanted to clear up the differing testimonies between us and the carabinieri concerning a badge that officers allegedly found in the camper as well as the circumstances of our arrest.

For the following eleven days we were kept in suspense. There was another meeting with our lawyer (the first time we were only able to meet with him for five minutes before the examining magistrate began interviewing us) but he couldn't tell us very much...just that we would have to face a tribunal of three civil judges someday soon.

Our situation in jail improved in the meantime. On Sunday, 28 July we were allowed to walk in the yard for 30 minutes. On Wednesday, 1 August, after several unsuccessful tries, our parents were allowed to visit us. We were able to get in contact with other convicts who knew why we were in jail. Most of them were friendly and helped us out with little gifts like toothbrushes and toothpaste—things that had been confiscated along with our other stuff. All we had left were the clothes we wore.

On Wednesday, 8 August at 08:00, a guard unexpectedly unlocked our jail cell and said we should follow him. It was time for the tribunal. We were placed in shackles and additionally bound by metal ropes, then transported with a group of special prisoners—a horrible spectacle! After a ride of one hour, we had to wait in the cellar of the courthouse for five hours, still in shackles and with those metal ropes. At 14:00, the "tribunal of freedom" was held for us: three civil judges who passed their time sleeping and sending messages on their mobile phones while our two Italian lawyers attempted to save our souls. After our advocates finished their defence, no comment was made by the judges and we, the prisoners, were returned to jail.

Thursday was a long, horrible day of not knowing, but on Friday, 10 August we were finally released!

As I write this article, it is 23 July, 2002. Twelve months have gone by and nothing has happened. No Italian court will be putting us on trial for at least another six months. "They are still investigating." The vague situation between hope and fear continues, for us and the many other arrested protestors of the 2001 G8-summit in Genova.

For more information, visit: genoa-resistance.org.

The last information about the investigations against mention italian criminal code 416 [criminal conspiracy - black bloc], 419 [destroying and plundering of property], 337 [violence and threats against a public officer], 582 [inflicting bodily harm] and unlawful possession of weapons. We were arrested and held in jail without any proper evidence, so why shouldn't we be sentenced to 10 years?

*italian police force
For more information: genoa-resistance.org

Article by Nils (Germany) apesontherise@aol.com



THE SCORE

This issue marks a change to the MediaReader review section. We will no longer be reviewing everything that we receive. We feel that there are ample magazines that serve this purpose, and it was never our intention to serve as a space for 100+ reviews per issue. That stated, we are still reviewing records, but on a selective basis. We have a limited amount of space to work with and, as such, only review videos, books, and full-length recordings. We do not review zines, 7" singles, CD singles, or label compilations composed of exclusively that label's bands. Because we review the design of the album, we do not review CDs sent without the intended retail packaging. Send all review material to our **new address: MediaReader, Post Box 220386, Chicago, IL 60622, USA**



TOP MUSIC PICKS

The Pupils (Dischord)
Bright Eyes (Saddle Creek)
The Flying Luttenbachers (Skin Graft)
Jason Loewenstein (Sub Pop)
Mayday (Saddle Creek)
Pedro the Lion (Jade Tree)

TOP DESIGN PICKS

V/A Fields and Streams 2xCD (Kill Rock Stars)
The Kills (Dim Mak)
Pedro the Lion (Jade Tree)
Bright Eyes (Saddle Creek)
Friction (Polyvinyl)
Aina (Bipartite)

Against Me! ★★★★★

Reinventing Axl Rose
No Idea

This band's reputation precedes their CD. I was told, "'Folk-punk,' play it dude" while I was working at the Fireside Bowl. And you know, it kind of is folk-punk. I can't make up my mind about it. Sometimes it reminds me of Oplvy, sometimes of that song that Propagandhi did about the West Bank, sometimes of Bright Eyes, sometimes of Don Martin 3, and even occasionally of Nick Cave. Qualities of all those bands shine through at certain moments, but I'm having a problem buying into this CD. Wise man speaks: "Sincerity can only be defined by the moment in which the audience is immediately situated." So provided that the quote makes sense to you, my only explanation is that I'm not in that moment right now. The defining characteristic of the 21st century is playing out to be irony. Everything is ironically retro. Plagiarism is in. The biggest bands right now are stealing Stooges songs or Nation of Ulysses packaging or settling for being completely derivative of the Saints. Rap metal is out, Jimmy Eat World is in. Emo in the Ebullition vein is so cliché. I mean, it's been so co-opted that the idea is passé, and can it ever again have the same importance? It's a very depressing state of modern "punk." And in

contrast to this comes Against Me! The idea of this band is fucking good and the music is great. My only problems are that the vocals tend to get too over the top in the screamy Don Martin 3 type of way and the lyrics are often too heavy handed and obvious (in the DIY, social/political punk type of way) without being phrased as well as they could be. Aside from this, the singer has a great voice that really shines on the more laid back songs and the music begins to push new directions. I'd love to see them lay back from the screaming, re-examine lyrical phrasing and step this thing up a bit. You can dance to this, and they don't sound like the MC5.

DESIGN ★

The inherent problem here is the album title, and the design is functioning together to create something that I don't feel proud about holding in my hands. Kind of an anarchist take on Axl Rose. Sorry, but Axl just doesn't stand the test of time, no matter how good the designer is. Bad title, bad cover, good record.

Aina ★★

Bipartite
Superbad Records / BCore Disc

Sounds a lot like Grippe-era Jawbox. Not necessarily a bad thing if you like that era Jawbox, but it does sound an awful lot like that. A little more guitar

rock thrown with a light Shiner influence, but definitely in this vein. Not terribly exciting in 2002, but very good execution from this Spanish band. I look forward to hearing more.

DESIGN Pau Santesmasses ★★★★★

Holy shit! The best use of vellum ever! I can't describe it without it sounding hokey, but this CD packaging is absolutely aaaamazing! Very simple yet totally amazing. If this was the cover of the latest Weezer album, it would have won best record cover of the year by *Rolling Stone* or whatever mainstream press. All vellum with sparse full color picture of the band with every member isolated. They print on both sides of the vellum to play with space and relationships. Fantastic!

Aloha ★★★★★

Sugar
Polyvinyl

Aloha is an amazing band that's always had certain charm with their mix of indie rock-jazz fusion. Their sound is somewhere between Chic Corea's *Return To Forever* and Yo La Tengo. Sugar is a far more pop oriented album than their previous recordings. This one, their second full length for Polyvinyl, could be their best album to date. Nevertheless, the jazz influence is still there. That makes this a record perfect for jazz fans or anyone who appreciates good music.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE IT YOU HAD BEST REMEMBER THIS IF IT ISN'T PENETRATION THEN IT ISN'T WORTH A KISS

PEDRO THE LION

DESIGN ★★★

Four panel degapac that gives you a feel to what is on the record. Includes live shots. (A)

Bright Calm Blue ★★★

Asymmetry Set
Divot

Bright Calm Blue hail from Lincoln, Ne and play mid-90s inspired screamo that is disappointing to me. Many people told me that they sounded like Antioch Arrow, but they sound more like At The Drive In than Antioch Arrow. Now don't get me wrong—I happen to really enjoy this record, and they're probably great to see live, but Antioch Arrow they are not! I would have enjoyed this band a lot more if it was described differently.

DESIGN ★★

Sketched out drawing of people walking around what seems to be a city on an orange background that I really don't like at all (A)

Bright Eyes ★★★★★

Lifted...
Saddle Creek

A doozy. At the same time their most brilliant and weakest record. This thing is a massive production: over twenty musicians, most of which play in bands that have had releases on Saddle Creek: Mayday, Lullaby for the Working Class, the Faint, and on and on. Some songs bring to mind David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust era while others evoke Wilco and yet others are spoken heavily from Dylan. Track seven being heavily influenced, both musically and lyrically, from Dylan's "Masters of War." It's not that these songs are coming out of left field, they are massive productions of the songs you would expect from Bright Eyes. And, for any band, indie or major, this is really massive, and congratulations for that. My main complaint with the record has nothing to do with the music, but the lyrics. What originally drew me to the band was Conor's ability to fluctuate between nihilism and optimism, depression and lukewarm happiness, self-hatred and borderline self-acceptance. From the last few releases I've felt that this band has a much greater sense of self-awareness. Not an "awakening" akin to post-drug-era JFA or the "newborn" Dylan, but an awareness that thousands of people are infatuated with this band. And that further, what comes with this popularity is the responsibility of accountability for what you're saying in the songs. And I feel that Conor is aware and freaked out that so many people relate to his early lyrics of self-depreciation and self-hatred; and thus, he is attempting to write lyrics that focus on the optimistic, of the uplifting spirit. But maybe I'm full of shit and there is enough cynicism here to

pacify people, but there are some real cringers on this record that didn't exist on the first two LPs. The words walk a fine line between brilliant and horrible, and all the self-referential bits don't do much to better the brilliant part. Bottom line is that I don't want to hear about how good you feel because I don't feel good, and I don't want to hear about a band being a band because I can't relate. Maybe Agent Orange is the only band that ever talked about that well because they transcended the bandtalk into values that this community (hopefully) holds dear. Beyond the lyrical criticism is also lyrical congratulations. Some of the stuff on this album is simply amazingly phrased and perfect, so don't let me give you the idea that it's all negative. That being said, the music is massive and powerful, convincing and convicting. Backup vocals swell in and draw us out to the sea. Tracks 3 and 5 are the standouts, and, expectedly, the least expected songs. Beats the shit out of Metallica collaborating with a symphony.

DESIGN: Matt Maginn ★★★★★

You couldn't expect anything less massive than the packaging. It's a faux book, old and worn. Perfectly designed and 32 pages long. They couldn't have done anything better. Now is the paper outer covering just a waste of paper? Not here. It's perfect.

The Capitol City Dusters ★★★★★

Rock Creek
Dischord Records

At first listen I scoffed at the familiar DC influenced turf. The Dusters sound is firmly planted in the production values established by mid-nineties Dischord. Equal parts grinding guitars, punk/dub influenced bass/drum combo and spastic yelps. I was sure I had been handed another plausible yet redundant Fugazi imitation, but once I got past that knee-jerk flinch I found myself bobbing right along to some incredibly catchy, quirky and well written songs. The Capitol City Dusters have fun with elements that have become stale. Songs write themselves just before becoming overwrought with self-righteousness or cliché while maintaining the perfect blend of urgency and pop sensibility. As the record continues and the band relaxes influences abound: The Pixies, The Minutemen, Gang of Four, and The Clash all seep into various songs. Buoyant and cheerful music coupled with snotty yet bouncy vocals create a great listen by a daring band that deserves your attention.

DESIGN Alec Bourgeois ★★

Perfectly functional: a hazy photo of a winter landscape, lyrics in typewriter font, and photos of various drums. Perhaps a little too functional, the design perpetuates the Dischord myth and doesn't give credit to the wide array of music contained within. (DW)

The Cassettes ★★

Self-Titled
Lovitt Records

Featuring Shelby from Frodus with Steve and Stephen from Dead Meadow and Jennifer from Weird War, The Cassettes are a most bizarre combo. It's Hall & Oates thrown into a genetic blender with Jason Faulkner and the Beatles. It's classic rock, but unlike the rock revival thing that has exploded. This CD goes to the area that most people are scared to fuck with. Track 9 reminds us of Sympathy For the Devil with its bluesy rock'n roll roots, while others feature pentatonic guitar leads and good times. Suffering from a bad recording, this disc is a little too happy to do it for me.

DESIGN Prof. Yaya ★★

Cover and back cover are goofy Illustrator© cartoon "illustrations." Pretty funny actually, but oddly modern. Looks like the thing you'd expect from a Flash© website. Inside is pleasant and hand done.

Dillinger Four ★★★★★

Situationist Comedy
Fat Wreck Chords

Minneapolis' alcoholic punk darlings debut their first LP for Fat. Fans of previous D4 releases won't be disappointed. Fast and furious, melodic and cynical music from this crazy-as-shit-when-you-see-them-live band. Funny as shit but dead serious at the same time, goofy but convincing. Honest and raw punk music that rocks.

DESIGN Jason Miller ★★

Fucking funny... Would you expect anything less? Titled *Situationist Comedy* and laden with photos of the band dressed as revolutionary apes. Flawless.

The Flying Luttenbachers ★★★★★

Infection and Decline
Skin Graft

Intentionally challenging to the listener, tension building to say the least, carefully drawn. This Luttenbachers album reminds me of two important facts. One: Bands who challenge themselves musically and artistically make way more interesting music. Two: There are a lot of popular "underground" bands right now who have no fucking grasp of their instruments or how to play WITH each other and it's always refreshing to hear a unit who not only have a game plan, but also know how to throw down. This record gives me a similar "Whoa!" feeling that I got the first time I heard Pain Killer, but the sound is more focused, more ROCK. I also hear respectful influence all the way from Black Flag to Branca. These guys deserve props, they have been doing this for a long time. This album is a

IF I COULD FORCE A SMILE I'D REALIZE THAT HAPPINESS IS OVERRATED.

FRICION

sonic landscape like a war. Maybe a war on *you*. Last thoughts: 1. Recorded well. Turn it up to just before your speakers start to break up for intended effect. 2. Roto-Toms are, and always will be, the shit. 3. They make ALOT of sound for a three-piece and while there are no electronics listed in the sleeve, there are some ‘non guitar-like sounds’ panning around in a few songs. I need to see how/if this happens live too. 4. This shit knocks you down and chokes you. Don’t take my word for it, please go and listen for yourself. (NL)

Friction ★★★

Hours of Operation: Discography
Polyvinyl

Those those unfamiliar with Friction, it’s an early-90s showcase of members that went on to form more well-known bands. Part went on to form Braid, and part of Braid went on to form Hey Mercedes (refer to their review in this issue). Influenced by contemporaries Jawbox, Cap’n Jazz, and Jawbreaker, Friction wrote upbeat and catchy melodic punk songs very similar to their later incarnation of Braid. *Rule of Elevens* just may be the highlight track to summarize Friction’s optimism, introspection, and sheer honesty. Friction was the highlight of this sound, and now all their work is compiled onto a double CD.

DESIGN Gregg Bernstein ★★★★★

A massive booklet accompanies this CD including lyrics, notes, flyers, photos, and a comprehensive list of every shows Friction played, complete with the bands they played with. One of the nicest packages to come out in recent years, comparable to the Jawbreaker “Etc” album that was just released. The cover focuses on a storefront “closed” sign with the stick-on lettering reading: “Friction 1991/1994.” Stellar job in design, content, and overall construction. A++.

Greg Macpherson Band *No Stars*

Good Times Coming Back Again
G-7

At best, mediocre indie-rock; at worst, a fantastic waste of time. A cross between the Weakerthans and some horrible radio shit, mostly the radio part. OK, so I’ll level with you: ten years ago I did own that first Live album. What’s more: I liked it. I listened to it more than enough times to where I’m not pulling this out of my ass in some music-nerd-trying-to-slam-a-band type of way: this sounds like a really bad version of Live. Mind you, I said *bad*. That should tip you off. What would you think if I insisted: “this is the sound that Live was going for all those years?” Why did G-7 put this out? Oh fuck it, put a bullet in my foot...

DESIGN Karen Asher No Stars

Unacceptably horrible. Looking at it makes you not want to listen to it. NOTE: Red and black evokes the sticker guy, who has single-

handedly ruined that color combination. And that type-writer font is actually *not* cool anymore. Jesus fucking Christ! If you’re going to spend the time to record it, please please please spend the time to look at the proofs before you say OK. It’s not ok. Consumer alert, consumer alert!

Hey Mercedes ★

The Weekend CDEP
Vagrant

Whatever happened to Braid? Despite being the greater half of Braid, this band shows very few of the definitive characteristics that made Braid the Midwestern powerhouse they were. Hey Mercedes writes pop songs that appeal to the lowest common denominator of the American population. That large percentage of people who everyday settle for Jimmy Eat World or Blink 182 on the local alternaradio station and probably get into the Tool or Real Big Fish song that appeared afterwards. This is to punk as Kenny G is to jazz: unchallenging, uninspiring, and, overall, a very depressing reminder of what has happened to this community. Being a Braid fan, this CD comes as a great disappointment, as I know these guys are capable of writing great songs. Oddly enough, the hidden track on this thing is the most interesting song on this EP. As a personal suggestion to the band and label: rewrite the one sheet, it makes it seem as if these guys started Hey Mercedes because they couldn’t stand the idea of working and needed a cash cow. That’s not what you’re actually trying to get at, is it?

DESIGN Greg Bernstein, Photos Chris Strong ★

Absolutely stellar photographs coupled with minimal but tight design bring us yet another CD that looks like... The Promise Ring. Sorry, but ‘pretty’ and ‘tranquil’ is just not an interesting concept anymore. It’s an emo-pop-phenomenon status quo formula. Come on guys, the Smiths, the Clash, Gang of Four—they did a great job. If you’re not going to try it in your music, at least try to come up with a packaging scheme that is your own.

Jason Loewenstein ★★★★★

At Sixes and Sevens
Subpop

Sebadoh’s Jason Loewenstein is back on the scene with a solo record. Demonstrating his knack for guitar wizardry, Jason guides us through an indie rock cave to the final destination where his guitar solo screeches to ask us a simple question: Do you *still* like this shit? Well, the answer is simple: Fuck yea! It’s the type of indie rock album that tons of bands have tried to make... so many indeed that the genre left you with a bad taste in your mouth. This may be one of the few nuggets of truth in a sea of fool’s gold, so reach down to grab it while you can. He’s not going for catchy pop songs here, just solid rock tunes.

DESIGN Jason Loewenstein ★★

A pretty early 90s vibe here. He’s apparently got a thing for tornados, and I’m not quite getting the title of the record. Not an instant classic but pleasant. It doesn’t overwhelm you but grows on you. Better than most...

Jets to Brazil ★★★★★

Perfecting Loneliness
JadeTree

What a pleasant surprise and giant step for this band. A much rawer and honest record than their previous two, this full length shows Jets losing their over the top pop sap. Moving closer to a combination of later era Jawbreaker with the classic Jets brit pop thing, this record far surpasses their other work and will appease people who have been desiring something more driving from these guys. It’s the record that you were wanting Orange Rhyming Dictionary to be.

DESIGN ★

Keeping in line with their previous releases, JtoB executes the standard type writer font over a quirky painting. I’m not a fan of the thing they have going on.

Kerbloki ★★★★★

Self-Titled
Bi-focal Media

Kerbloki, a group who received flak on their first release as some sort of insensitive cultural colonialists (even to some extent by me) for their basic concept, is back with another powerful release, wondering what the hell y’all are talking about, because all they were ever trying to do was rock the party people. The history of white people in rap *is* dicey- the Beastie Boys wanted to title their first album *don’t be a faggot*, proving that they were not adverse to the idea of make fun of minority groups. But when you consider the current mainstream musical trends, I mean, come on, people, the White Stripes are the number one musical sensation in the land. That’s about one step away from Elvis as far as co-option of musical forms by white people, and Kerbloki is way more sincere. Why come down on these guys? This is more DIY than the new Eminem, and freer of faggot references. Spend your money on this before you spend your money on that.

DESIGN John Bowman ★★★★★

A simple visual pun: a blocky K (get it?). Rumor has it that when asked to draw the cover art, Harrison Haynes asked when they needed it by and received the answer, “Oh, in an about an hour.” The results are awesome. It’s the kind of thing you could imagine spending two months on and it coming out worse. (AB)

I'D LOVE TO STARE AT THE CAMERA FOR YOUR REVOLUTION BUT I JUST CAN'T AFFORD THE FUCKING COSTUME DILLINGER FOUR

The Killing Tree ★★★

Bury Me At Make-Out Creek
Government Music / Red Line

Super aggressive metal edge hardcore that occasionally bust into a Moss Icon type part and reminds me of other Ebullition releases. Heavy DIY hardcore done really well. These guys shine when the singer takes a pause from screaming to actually sing and pick up our adrenaline with his killer voice. This is the vocal strength of this band and I wish he'd go for it more often. These guys could sit equally well on a Yaphet Kotto show or a High On Fire show. Well, if they were into smoking more weed they could do the High on Fire thing. I've seen them live and they're fucking animals.

DESIGN Michael Joseph Jackson ★½

Pretty cool two color cover. Black and red with a semi-grungy/hardcore look that you could expect. Other than the cover, there's not much to the packaging. Simple and cool.

The Kills ★★½

Black Rooster CDEP
Dim Mak

The debut from an angular but jammy early 80s-inspired two piece. One voice sounds like Lou Reed, the other has the power of Pat Benatar with more nonchalant execution. The upside is that the music and vocals are great; the downside is that the repetitive lyrics have the tendency to be horrible. Almost like a two piece does X crossed with early Stones and the Velvet Underground. A weird combo but it doesn't sound weird at all. Play it at a party and you'll make people squirm, play it in your car and you'll notice what they're saying. You're a little fucked either way. They go by the names VV and Hotel, which carries the same type of

YOUR MOMA LOOK LIKE CAROL CHANNING

GREG MACPHERSON BAND

polars: equally as great and terrible at the same time. For you nerds, this is the singer of Discount’s new band. She moved to England and started this thing, but she doesn’t advertise it as such. Live they are fantastic, so I’m awaiting the next release.

DESIGN ★★★★★

One of the best to come in. The cover could have come out in ’78 and been equally as good. Warhol inspired via a copy machine and film negatives. Perfectly degenerated yet perfectly clear. This band is fighting a lot of opposites in their record. The cover comes together with harmony and balances intention with content.

Kurt ★★★★★

La Guard

X-Mist Records (LP) / Nova Recordings (CD)

After several years since their last full-length, one of the most important European hardcore bands has returned to put a serious record in our hands. “La Guard” shows the old Shotmaker-inspired Kurt abandoning their principles and pursuing a more rounded approach to rocking as hard as a band can possibly rock. We see hints of the Hot Snakes, Arab on Radar, and the drive of the Wipers coupled with the energy that made Sleepytime Trio a spontaneous powerhouse. It all combines to make Kurt’s cohesive sound explode with urgency in 8 songs that clock in around 21 minutes. I’m a fan of the old Kurt records, and this new LP blows the doors off all of those. Highly recommended for anyone who wants a record that drives so hard it will run you off the road.

DESIGN Kurt ★★

Cover image is pretty cool. Two color photocopy-looking image in red and yellow, hand lettered. Not a big fan of the font used on the back. Simple yet functional. The music is much better than the cover, but that’s what this band is about... the music.

The Lawrence Arms ★

Apathy and Exhaustion

Fat Wreck Chords

This is another attempt by Fat to release a record that sounds nothing like NOFX. What you have here is Jawbreaker influenced pop punk with two singers. It seems that Brendan Kelly hasn’t changed his vocal style one bit since his ska-punk band Slapstick began releasing music nearly ten years ago. This band creates an unoriginal and bland sound amongst an already stale genre. This album fits perfectly as back-

ground music in a teen movie and next to spiked belts at your local Hot Topic store. This is just another mediocre release.

DESIGN ★

Sketchy drawing attempts to connect the artwork to the music. Trying to read any of the lyrics is difficult because of the black on moss green layout. (A)

Mayday ★★★★★

Old Blood
Saddle Creek

Most (if not all) of Nebraska legends Lullaby for the Working Class reunite to form Mayday. Unexpectedly, the first two tracks remind me a bit of Aloha without the crazy vibe thing going on. From here, the album moves into a more subtle alt-country groove ala Wilco, Sun Volt, Bright Eyes, Lullaby, combined with the pace and weight of Low. The guitar work is relatively untouchable and heavy with deliberation. The slide guitar is, as always with Omaha-based albums, outstanding, and the album takes an epic approach to delivering it's massive songs. Most of these musicians played on the new Bright Eyes record, so there is an apparent similarity in some of the music and instrumentation, fully culminating over the track that Conor from Bright Eyes sings. I wouldn't be surprised if this track was actually recorded at the BE sessions for "Lifted." Fronted by Ted Stevens, this debut full-length is an outstanding showcase of an unassumingly powerful band.

DESIGN Robb Nansel, Matt Maginn, Ted ★★

I'm not feeling the cover so much. Lots of negative space with a typewriter font. Photographic play on rotten fruit, but I'm not seeing how it fits the music.

ASK WHAT HAPPENED TO BELIEVERS. THEY WILL NEVER BELIEVE AGAIN

Q AND NOT U

Pedro the Lion ★★★★★

Control

Jade Tree

I was scared of these guys for years based on their heavy-handed roots in Christianity. And I was equally as scared of this record, until I started listening to it and couldn't stop. The song writing is as strong as it comes, the lyrics incredibly bitter, and the mood uplifting but incredibly down. As far as I can understand, this band is essentially a solo project. And I think it's the solo nature of this band that can account for every instruments' equal importance. The parts are simple: the guitar doesn't explode, the drums don't roll, the bass doesn't fight for attention. And this is precisely the reason that the craftsmanship is so good here. Certainly there are amazing records that are made from the complexity of instruments and "musicianship," but it's nice to see someone looking at the greater picture of the puzzle rather than its pieces. It's just a different approach to songwriting and it's equally as powerful if done well. Pedro the Lion has pulled it off to a T. And no, the religion thing is barely there. And when it is, it's bitter, confused and cynical.

DESIGN ★★★★★

Scratch off letters and yellow-creamish drawings. Typography and design function flawlessly, drawings are great. This couldn't look better.

The Pupils ★★★★★

Self-Titled

Dischord

Daniel and Asa from Lungfish return with a new band of equal magnitude to their previous one. Functioning as a stripped-down Lungfish of sorts, The Pupils lull you with vocals and repetitive guitar lines that aren't aggressive, but definitely aren't background. These guys have the building off of repetition thing down. This is their power:

BUT I CARRY THIS WITH ME STILL: THE SIGHT OF THE BLOOD IN THE DRAWER OF EVERY RETAIL WORKER'S TILL PAINTED THIN

they can construct entire songs out of a single riff without you noticing that you've been listening to the same thing for two minutes. These guys have a rare gift that they're putting on the table for you to tap into. My favorite non-Fugazi release from Dischord since their split release of *Beauty Pill*.

DESIGN Jason Farrell ★★½

The idea of this record is either to kill you with simplicity or to resurrect you with simplicity. The music follows the pattern and the design follows the music. One black and white photo on the cover followed by five stark white panels containing sparse type-written (yes, actually type-written: no "font" here) text and song lyrics. Fittingly perfectly simple. Hats off to the band for not using any computer typefaces on this record!

Q and Not U ★

Different Damage
Dischord

Since their last full-length, this band has turned into a 3 piece. And following up a fantastic EP comes *Different Damage*. This LP showcases Q and Not U being heavily influenced by Fugazi, The Dismemberment Plan, and Les Savy Fav. Q and Not U functions as sort of a poor-man's lo-fi version of all three of these bands. The drumming follows that of the D Plan but can't quite follow through with the promise, the guitar work follows that of Fugazi (suffering yet the same shortcoming), and the lyrics focus more on word texture than actually conveying anything intelligible. Think of the play of e.e. cummings combined with the word positioning of Jawbreaker and subtract the content. The singer that sings the lesser half of the songs is unacceptably ganking The Panoply Academy Legionnaires. I get the same feeling from Q and Not U that I got from one of my friends when he went to LA to score a soundtrack to a movie. He told

AND WHEN I SAID I LOVED YOU I SWEAR TO GOD I LIED. DIE MOTHERFUCKER.
THE KILLING TREE

me “it’s dance music, I hate dance music... Why did they have me do this?” Like him, this band should not try to make dance music.

DESIGN Q and Not U, Photos: Shawn Brackbill ★★

It’s perfectly fine but not very good. The photos are nice but not stimulating. Everything is average but not good. It does the opposite of making you think: it makes you settle for something boringly mundane and done.

Randy ★★★
Cheater
G-7 Welcoming Committee

The comparison to the Hives will be inevitable here. This is another high-energry Swedish rock’n roll band that’s been around a long time but just signed to Burning Heart (G-7 licensed this EP), which means Epitaph here in the states, which means exposure. Like the Hives, Randy plays super upbeat old style rock, but more early 80s punk influenced r’n roll instead of the Saints-influenced sort. Catchy, anarchist rock’n roll. If this sounds like your ticket, this is your record.

DESIGN ↴

Remarkably ugly record cover. Looks like the sketch for an Orchid record. Bad skull and font. Nothing redeeming at all here, but you can’t judge a book by it’s cover...

Sixty Stories / Painted Thin ★↵
Different Places to Sit
Smallman Records /The Company With
The Golden Arm

This CD features five Painted Thin songs and seven songs by some of the members’ new band, Sixty Stories. Painted Thin sounds suspiciously like the Propagandhi songs that the guy from the Weakerthans sang. Very close. Sixty Stories sounds much like Painted Thin (not surprisingly, considering they share members) except for they rely

FUCK MY FACE. FUCK MY NAME. THEY ARE BRIEF AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS FOR A SOUL THAT I DON'T HAVE BRIGHT EYES

on more electronic samples and female vocals. Overall, the Sixty Stories songs are more convincing. Maybe somewhere between Discount and Propagandhi crossed with Atom and His Package. Not astounding, but pretty cool.

DESIGN Sixty Stories NO STARS

Very bad, not worth commenting on. Looks like there was a computer but no idea. Next time get an idea and lose the computer.

Soul Embraced ★★★

This Is My Blood
Solid-State Records

Death metal pop metal. A strange combination. Super heavy dual rectifiers, double bass and screaming. Singing comes in with some acoustic guitar parts that point to Metallica. Other parts lead us to Slayer or Cannibal Corpse. Super heavy at times and super cheesy and others. This record is a battle between this band's extremes of indie vs. A Perfect Circle type of pop metal. It's an 80s era death metal album released fifteen years late, thus showing us influences of the other bands that have influenced these guys. Scary lyrics and solos galore, but are these guys trying to sneak in Christian ideology between their gruesome chops? Members of this band play in Living Sacrifice.

DESIGN D. Clark ★★★★★

This is both the best and worst packaging to come in this time around. Borderline hyper-produced and borderline total cheese. It rivals the booklets of Marilyn Manson and NIN. Super slick and well designed, they use type as a functional design element and feature glam shots of the members in a crazy way. It reminds me of something that I'd expect HydraHead to release, but they take it

WE OWE THE THUGS OF CAPITAL NOTHING EXCEPT THEIR DISMANTLING SERVICE ANXIETY

further... Which is where the cheese factor comes in. I can't make up my mind. Genius or goofy? Either way, kudos for doing it!

Spaceheads ★★★

Low Pressure

Merge

It's been around six years since I saw Spaceheads play in the Dick St. house (RIP) in Greensboro, NC. At that time they were billed as having some connection with the Dog Faced Hermans, though I am still unsure as to the connection other than geography. Spaceheads were a storm at that show: a drums and trumpet avant-garde duo that specialized in unheard noises, trumpets through effects pedals, and jamming drumming. Their new LP shows me where this band has gone over the last few years, transforming into less noise and more jam. Relying extensively on digital recording, Spaceheads have turned drumbeats backwards and forwards and assembled a CD that contains a slew of various ambient, groovy instruments. The final product is almost clubby, heavily reminiscent of the Thievery Corporation and other 17th Street bands. The unpredictable noise that I loved so much years ago has been replaced by computer calculation, and I have a hard time jamming to computers.

DESIGN Spaceheads ★★★

Photomontage. A brightly colored map, house, and toy grace the cover reminding us of travel, living, and music. Bold type. The more I look at it the more I like it. I'd like to own the LP of this. The artwork would be great at full size.

The Wage Of Sin ★★★

The Product of Deceit and Loneliness

Immigrant Sun

Unashamedly fitting into the metal hardcore genre somewhere between At the Gates and Damad, The Wage of Sin kick out eight tracks of in-your-face this-is-metal hardcore. From harmonized guitars to High on Fire style heaviness, these five women let anger rage through their instruments. It's a solid record that doesn't try to mess with the genre as much as it tries to execute the genre, which is my main compliment and criticism. Note to band: Wherever the backing vocals on the second track came from... Find them again, run them down and fucking use them, use them, use them. Those vocals are the strength of this record and break you out of the screamo cliché of metalcore. Find them again and you will rule.

DESIGN Sean Mallinson ★★

A standard nice looking record. In the vein of most of the Victory design, but with an Immigrant Sun influence. Great photos, tinted so that yellow, brown, and black prevail.

Dark and almost introspectively horror movie-esque, this package is "professional" while not going quite far enough in either direction to be convincing. As with the music, it fits to neatly into a standard of production.

The Walkmen / Calla ★

Split CD

Troubleman

Each band does two tunes. The Walkmen are pop that showcases harmonica on the first of two. It's standard folkly pop, not very gripping or memorable but improves when the lap steel comes in. Calla plays similar music. On first listen I didn't notice that the band changed but

NOW MEN WITH PURPLE HEARTS CARRY SILVER GUNS. AND THEY WILL
KILL A MAN FOR WHAT HIS FATHER HAS DONE. BUT WHAT MY FATHER
DID, YOU KNOW IT DON'T MEAN SHIT. I'M NOT HIM
BRIGHT EYES

thought that this was an album titled "Calla." On further listen, I can only deduce that the bands sound almost the same, except that Calla has a stronger influence from Black Heart or slow Pinback or Mazzy Star. It's executed non-descriptly. I feel like I should take valium now.

DESIGN ★

So, everyone thinks tigers are cool. But does it warrant using the same photo on the front and the back of the record? Pleasant enough but not very good. Done on a budget and it shows. It's a split release, so you can't complain too much. Or can you?

V/A Kill Rock Stars ★★★★★

Fields and Streams 2xCD

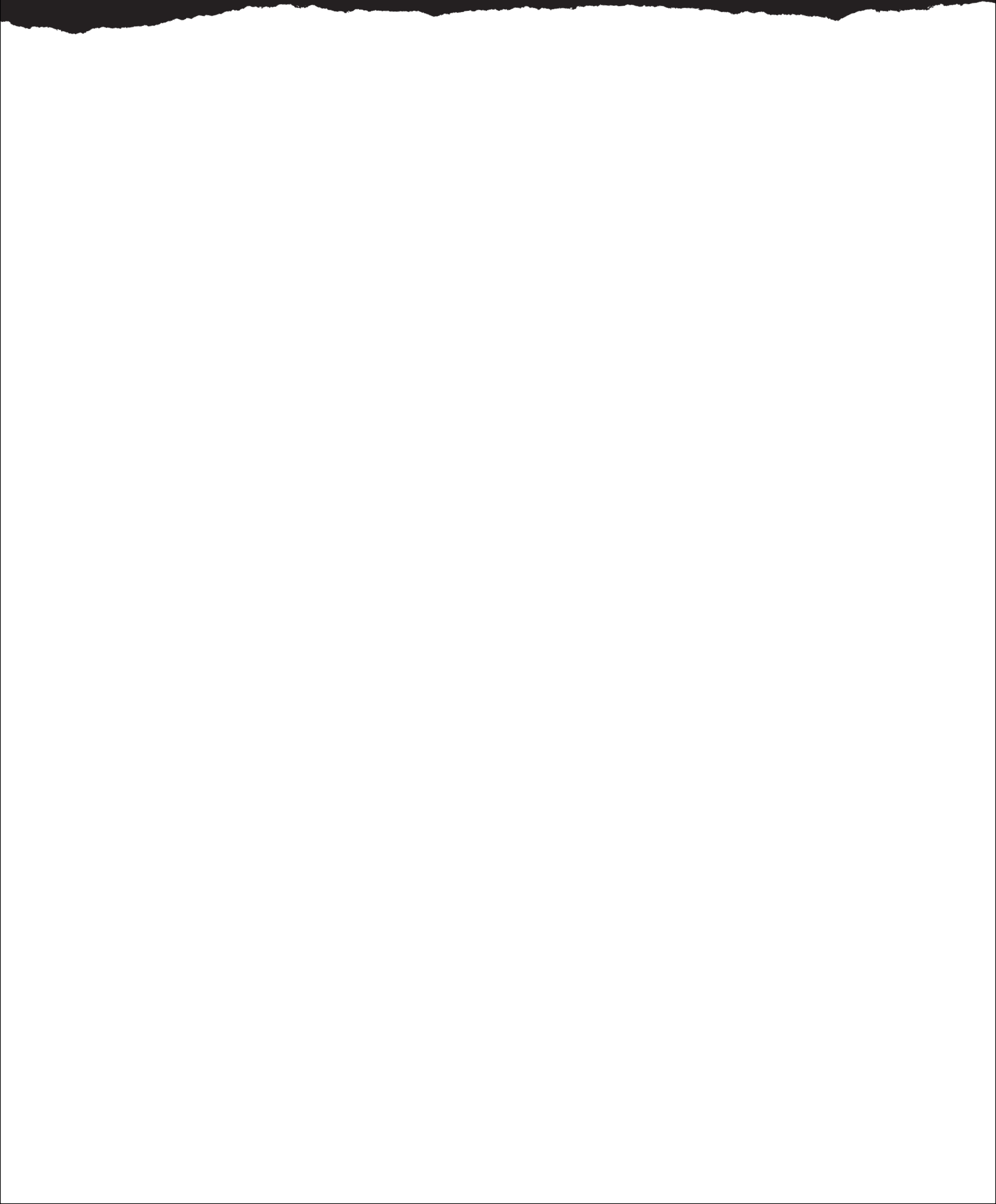
Kill Rock Stars

Consistently releasing awesome records, KRS throws us a massive compilation this month. Packed with 45 bands, it includes everything from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Red Monkey and Erase Errata to Deerhoof, The Butchies, Neko Case, Mecca Normal and tons of bands you've never heard of but totally rock. All bands seem to fit well on the label and there are only a couple stinker tracks on here. Overall one of the best comps to be released in a long time. And by the way, not all of these bands are on KRS, so it's not a label sampler but rather represents a broader spectrum of great things going on.

DESIGN Fon-Lin Nyeu ★★★★★

It's got this Scrabble© thing going on. And this grid thing. And pictures of deer and nature. I can't do it justice at all, but it makes me feel really good when I'm looking at it. I don't know if I've ever had a record cover do that to me before, and I kind of need that right now. I wish I had a giant poster of it that I could hang up in my room.

DO YOU WANT TO FUCK AND FIGHT?
THE KIDS LIKE TO FUCK AND FIGHT IN THE BASEMENT.
THE KILLS



THEY'LL PROBABLY GET WHAT THEY DESERVE NOT WHAT THEY DEMAND
UNLESS WE ALL DECIDE TO BE A BUSINESS NOT A BAND
AGENT ORANGE

THE SKYSHIP HAS MADE IT'S LAST STOP
THE CASSETTES

I have never met anybody who wasn't against war
Even Hitler and Mussolini were, according to themselves

David Low



MEDIAREADER

ISSUE FIVE: THE PHOTO DOCUMENTARY

FEATURING THE WORK OF MICHAEL RHOADES

Half a year in the making, Issue 5 of MediaReader showcases the work of Chicago-based photographer Michael Rhoades. The work explores the realms of human integrity, suffering, protest, and unity. Divided into four sections representing separate struggles from across the globe, Rhoades takes us to post-referendum East Timor, Mexico City, and finally post-September 11th Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

A softback book in nature, this zine showcases 164 pages of protests against globalization, the IMF, the World Bank, and the notion that war is a legitimate solution for our global problems.

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